FROM RADICALISM TO CONSERVATISM:

THE POLITICS OF WORDSWORTH AND COLERIDGE, 1797-1818

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This dissertation is the product of independent research. It is based on my own work and it has not been submitted for any other degree at any other University.

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CONTENTS

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NOTES ON SOURCES

Wordsworth and Coleridge constantly revised and altered their works, therefore, unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from their poetry and prose refer to the earliest complete version of the work concerned. Later, revised editions are introduced to reveal subsequent changes in their political thought.

It should be noted that there are three complete versions of The Prelude by Wordsworth: a two-part version of 1799, the Thirteen Book edition of 1805 and the revised Fourteen Book edition, which was the first to be published in 1850 after the poet's death. In this thesis most reference is made to the 1805 edition, although use is also made of the 1799 version and is identified as such in the text or footnotes. These two earlier versions of The Prelude are preferred to that of 1850 because they represent more accurately Wordsworth's political philosophy during the period under review.

It should be further noted that there are two major editions of Coleridge's journal The Friend: those of 1809/10 and 1818. There is also an intermediary version of 1812 which includes minor changes. The 1809/10 edition was published as a regular journal, but it ceased publication in March, 1810. In 1818 Coleridge re-published the entire work in a three volume edition, when it was not only revised, but much extended to include many new essays on morality and religion. Extensive use is made of both these editions of The Friend and credited accordingly. When the same passage occurs in both editions of the work, reference is made to the earlier 1809/10 edition. When Coleridge's ideas are changed for the 1818 edition, this is clearly stated.

ABSTRACT

In the early 1790s Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth sympathised with the radical ideals of the French Revolution and advocated a republican system of government. Nevertheless, by the time they became close friends in 1797, they were becoming increasingly disillusioned by the violent and despotic course of events in France. It is generally considered that, thereafter, they turned their backs on republicanism and embraced more conservative principles, becoming firm supporters of the 'Tory' administration in Britain.

This thesis explores this later transitional period which stretched from 1797 until 1818. It argues that, in their collaborative and individual work, the two writers shared an identity of political interests and sympathies. Their ideological progress followed a broadly similar course, as their philosophy developed in response to wartime events at home and abroad. In the process, each writer evolved an analogous, yet also distinctive, political philosophy. Although their thinking undoubtedly became more conservative during this period, there was not a simple abandonment of radical beliefs in favour of conservative ones. Instead, during this time of intense critical analysis, many of their more liberal instincts from the 1790s remained alive and were to re-emerge, after their war-time period of Tory nationalism, to be integrated with their more conservative view of the world. Therefore, in response to the post-war climate of depression and social unrest, Wordsworth had developed, by 1818, a philosophy of paternalistic and humanitarian conservatism, while Coleridge's beliefs had become more truly liberal-conservative: the conservative and liberal elements living through each and so forming one organic political philosophy.

INTRODUCTION

Wordsworth and Coleridge first met in Bristol in September 1795 and made an immediately favourable impression on each other. Wordsworth remarked, a month later,

> Coleridge was at Bristol part of the time I was there. I saw but little of him. I wished indeed to have seen more - his talents appear to me very great.[1]

Coleridge was already acquainted with Wordsworth's verse and had greatly admired it since 1793:

> During the last year of my residence at Cambridge, I became acquainted with Mr. Wordsworth's first publication entitled "Descriptive Sketches"; and seldom, if ever, was the emergence of an original poetic genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced.[2]

Their mutual attraction, however, originated not just in their admiration for each other's literary skills, but also in their shared radical sympathies. This first meeting between the two poets in Bristol most probably occurred at a political debating society in the city.[3] Over the preceding months there, Coleridge had been delivering a series of lectures on politics and religion.

Nevertheless, it was not until 1797 that their real friendship commenced and they began to exert an influence on each other's views. In March of that year Wordsworth visited Coleridge at Nether Stowey in Somersetshire and, later in the Summer, decided to move with his sister, Dorothy, into Alfoxden House a few miles away. As Dorothy Wordsworth admitted, 'Our principal inducement was Coleridge's society'.[4] Wordsworth was becoming unsettled and disillusioned by the course of the French Revolution and he found Coleridge's cheerful company comforting and stimulating. Coleridge's views found a receptive audience and helped to shape Wordsworth's philosophy at this crucial time. Coleridge, himself, was even more in awe of his new neighbour. For the first few years of their friendship, Coleridge worshipped Wordsworth and constantly denigrated his own talents, despite the fact that his influence was often the stronger. Desperate for approval and love, Coleridge attributed all his best thoughts and feelings to Wordsworth and showed an eager interest in all his friend's ideas. In a poem composed during

their visit to Germany in 1798, he called Wordsworth 'my teacher, my friend!' and concluded on a note which reveals the extent of his dependency:

> William, my head and my heart! dear William
> and dear Dorothea! You have all in each other;
> but I am lonely and want you![5]

By 1800 both writers had set up home in the Lake District: Wordsworth at Grasmere, Coleridge at Kendal. They visited each other frequently, travelled abroad together, maintained a constant correspondence when apart and, on many occasions, discussed their ideas and opinions with each other. This close relationship was to last for most of their lives, although it did temporarily, though noticeably, cool after their quarrel and estrangement between 1810 and 1812.

This friendship sustained itself, in large part, on their shared political interests and enthusiasms. In 1797 they both harboured doubts about the warlike course of the French republic and feared that the early principles of the Revolution were being abandoned. As these fears were confirmed in succeeding years, they sought new political solutions through mutual discussion and consultation, as well as by more independent routes. In each other they recognised something of their own reflection and, through each other, sought out new directions. The Lyrical Ballads of 1798 is only the most famous example of this joint enterprise. But even works under separate authorship, such as The Prelude (1805) or the projected The Recluse, were discussed between them. Wordsworth contributed pieces to Coleridge's journal, The Friend, and the extensive work by both writers on the Peninsular War was developed in collaboration. Throughout their poetry and prose there are countless allusions to, and echoes of, each other's work.[6] At every level the two friends had a profound effect on each other's views; whether aesthetic, moral or political.

Until 1818, however, current affairs and political ideas were the predominant concern for both Wordsworth and Coleridge. Wordsworth remarked to an American visitor, the Rev. Orville Dewey, that

> although he was known to the world as a poet, he had given twelve hours thought to the condition and prospect of society for one to poetry.[7]

Coleridge was similarly preoccupied with politics and wrote even more

extensively than Wordsworth on political and social problems. For much of the middle period of his life he was a political correspondent for the Opposition newspaper, The Morning Post, and then, after 1804, for the Government newspaper, The Courier. Like Wordsworth he produced political pamphlets, but he also wrote his own journals, The Watchman (1796) and The Friend (1809-10). In the latter he expounded the principles of his political philosophy and stated, in terms similar to Wordsworth's, that he was,

> an Author writing on subjects, to the investigation of which he professes to have devoted the greater portion of his life.[8]

In claiming this primary interest in politics, neither writer was exaggerating. Most of their work between 1797 and 1818 was directly or indirectly concerned with political issues and ideas, reflecting the predominating influence that war-time and post-war public events had on their own lives. It is also clear that Wordsworth and Coleridge were not only interested in writing about politics, but also took a positive part in political activity and debate. Wordsworth became involved in the public controversy surrounding the Convention of Cintra agreement and published a pamphlet on the issue in 1809. He also became an active campaigner for the Tory candidate in the Westmorland election of 1818. Coleridge was not only a newspaper columnist, but was also a writer of pamphlets on post-war distress (the Lay Sermons) and was engaged by Sir Robert Peel to support his Factory Bill in 1818, which he did enthusiastically in articles, pamphlets and letters. Thus, the two writers were not just theorists, but were actively engaged in the political controversies of the age.

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge believed that they had an important educative role to play in society, whether in the elucidation of fundamental political and moral principles, or in drawing their readers' attention to the pressing problems of the moment. As primarily creative writers, they believed that they were best equipped to search for and discover the true, ever-relevant principles and ideals which underlay all human activity. They had a greater psychological insight into the inner workings of society than historians or biographers, who, they believed, were more concerned with the mere chronicling of everyday events.[9] Moreover, they were able to use their imaginative skills to

enable readers to feel, as well as understand rationally, the truth in the ideas they discussed. It will be argued that this educative moral and political role, which they adopted, was regarded by them as their most serious social duty.

The early, radical phase of Wordsworth and Coleridge's political writings before they became friends, has come under close scrutiny in the past years from both literary critics and historians.[10] A brief preliminary sketch of these views must suffice here, as a preface to later changes.

In the early 1790 s, Wordsworth and Coleridge were on the moderate, middle class, and intellectual wing of radicalism. They never joined the more Jacobinical societies, such as the London Corresponding Society, nor did they ever formally join any political grouping. Wordsworth visited France in the first few years after the Revolution and mixed in Girondin circles. Coleridge, still a student of Cambridge, was involved in the radical, dissenting group at the University. Although the principles of the Revolution excited them with the prospect of a more perfect world, neither poet showed much sympathy for violent revolution as a means of translating their ideals into practice. They may have had republican sympathies, but they were not radical revolutionaries.[11] Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of nearly all their early writing is a strong revulsion over the use of violent methods to achieve politi cal or social goals. Insofar as they ever countenanced revolution it was only as a limited expedient, surgical in operation, undertaken in only the most extreme circumstances, and appropriate to some foreign land but not to Britain. Except in these precise, controlled conditions, gradual political, social or educative means were always preferred.

None the less, although Wordsworth and Coleridge were not revolutionaries, they were committed republicans.[12] Both writers favoured a more rational political system grounded in the natural, inalienable rights of the citizen and they extolled the virtues of freedom, equality and brotherhood. They sought a democratic constitution with adult male suff rage, frequent elections and less corruption; a society that was more egalitarian, stripped of titles and distinctions, except the natural rewards of merit. Wordsworth and Coleridge believed in the need for a

more caring government to help raise up the people and Coleridge, in particular, was convinced that an improvement in the people's condition was necessary before they could be entrusted with equal rights. Wordsworth attacked the grossly unequal distribution of property and Coleridge even planned to set up a community where property would be held in common by all its members. The dawning of the French Revolution seemed to hold out the promise that these liberal ideals would be vouchsafed to all humanity.

This early radical period of their political careers has attracted most attention, yet it was in the years after 1797, when they became close friends that their most productive political phase began. In response to the failure of the Revolution and the course of the war against France, and inspired by their shared interest, they wrote more extensively and profoundly on political questions than ever before. It will be argued that over the next twenty years it is possible to discern three inter-related stages in the development of their political ideas, as they departed from this radical base.

In Section I the period from 1797 until 1802 will be examined. During these years, when they became increasingly dis illusioned by the anarchy and the despotism to be found in France, Wordsworth and Coleridge began to examine their early radicalism in a more critical light. As the 'liberating' French armies invaded free, republican Switzerland both writers examined the way in which the fine principles of the revolution had become perverted. Still clinging to their republican ideals they sought a new, securer political and social context in which they could be planted. The early emphasis on natural rights and the free exercise of individual reason had proved to be an insufficient, unstable basis for a new republican system of government. Individual rights had been promoted at the expense of necessary moral duties, and selfish passions had become un-restrained. Moreover, this new system had been imposed on traditional society with little regard for past affections and customs, and without preparing the people to accept these radical changes. The republic had proved to be impermanent because it lacked firm, effective roots in existing social conditions.

Thus, Wordsworth and Coleridge sought out a more amenable context for republican principles to grow and thrive. Changes in the system of government had to be effected more gradually and to be adapted to

existing society. Though the object was still a republican constitution, this could not be imposed but had to develop in a more evolutionary manner, and the people had to be prepared for accepting these changes. Thus, republican forms had to be introduced pragmatically, with more concern for tradition; they were to be based in moral law as well as individual rights and in fellow feeling not just reason. In this context, republicanism could not be achieved as quickly but it would grow more surely, and be permanent. In this search for a new context for republicanism, however, it was inevitable that the principles to which they had once subscribed must also change and be re-defined. The radical concept of abstract natural rights could hardly be imposed gradually, so they also had to be re-interpreted in a new moral and historical context. By 1802 it was not just the radical context of republicanism that was being challenged, but also the fundamental rights which it generated.

In section II the period between 1802 and 1814 will be examined. As France, under Napoleon, proved to be irredeemably despotic, as its war aims became ever more acquisitive, Wordsworth and Coleridge began to view Britain's war effort with patriotic sympathy. Britain now seemed to represent the light of Christian virtue in a struggle against evil. Republicanism, which had failed France so disastrously, now appeared fundamentally flawed and both writers became more admiring of the existing political system in Britain which seemed to serve society best. The British constitution had grown out of tradition and was founded in moral law. Although the mass of ordinary people had no direct say in their own government, the will of the people was always respected and their interests looked after in a more secure, moral fashion by the propertied ruling classes. Such a constitution required only occasional minor alterations to maintain its continuing vigour and relevance to society. The influence of Burke, already apparent in their writings, between 1797 and 1802, now dominated their thinking.

If their ideological journey had ceased at this point, the transition of Wordsworth and Coleridge into the Tory camp would seem complete. In the years after 1814 however they were to qualify their judgements again in the light of practical experience. The transition from war to peace-time conditions revealed flaws in the workings of the political system they had admired. In Section III it will be argued that the distress of

the poor and the increasing materialism of the upper classes caused Wordsworth and Coleridge to question whether all the essential functions of the constitution were in fact being performed. The ends of government entailed a regard for the social welfare, morality and education of the people. In Britain, these ends had not only been neglected but, in the post-war years, seemed in danger of being swept aside altogether. Faced with the mounting unrest of the people and a resurgent radicalism, the government and most of its conservative supporters advocated a policy of repression to avert revolution. Wordsworth and Coleridge, while acknowledging the danger, treated the people's grievances as real and promoted a policy of state intervention to fulfil the social and moral ends of government. Wordsworth advocated a more paternal, caring attitude towards the poor; Coleridge recommended direct social reform. Both writers called vigorously for a programme of national education which would not only improve the intellectual understanding of the lower classes, but also provide for the moral education of the whole of society. For Wordsworth, these changes were essential to the continuing health of the constitution; Coleridge, venturing beyond Burke, saw change as an essential condition of the constitution itself. For him, the constitution was not a fixed form in need of occasional modifications, but a completely organic process, perpetually changing and living through society. As their political philosophy assumes its definitive style in 1818, Wordsworth and Coleridge emerge as conservative theorists, but their conservative defence of the constitution is mediated on the one hand by a morality that is applied in a paternal, humanitarian spirit and, on the other, by a morality that is organic to the constitutional process itself.

Although these three sections deal with distinct phases in their political writings, they are not self-contained; the progress from one to the next did not occur suddenly or decisively. The process, though clear, is, at times, contradictory and ambivalent. Indeed, the very notion of reducing their ideas to a system of political belief goes against the grain of much that they understood to be true. Both writers emphasised that political beliefs only attained full meaning when considered alongside the other principles which underpinned all of human life: social, economic, religious. Coleridge, in particular, saw life as one organic whole where each part, though distinct, depended

on all the other parts for life and meaning. In this context, the systematisation of only one aspect, like politics, was fundamentally false to the whole. Thus, in attempting to elucidate the development of their political theory, more attention than normal will be paid to their general view of society, economics and morality. Indeed, moral considerations came to dominate their political thinking to such an extent that the constitution itself seemed only one of the more pragmatic ways of realising Christian tenets of belief.

In tackling the years after 1797 one is dealing with the death of a revolution - the way in which former sympathisers coped with the ineluctable destruction of their ideals. In Britain, where the revolution had a mainly limited and ideological import, it is perhaps easiest to examine this demise and discover how principles were modified, survived or were jettisoned completely. Some supporters of the Revolution, such as Fox or Hazlitt, continued to sympathise with the French and they resisted the nationalistic fervour in Britain. Some, such as James Mackintosh, effected a quick change into the Tory ranks. But Wordsworth and Coleridge are representative of many radicals in this period, tugged three ways by innate patriotism, disillusionment with the French and by republican sympathies. In the years prior to 1802 they tried to reconcile these feelings, but, thereafter, they followed the vast majority of their fellow countrymen in aligning themselves behind Britain in the war and supporting the existing constitution. During this long, painful process they kept alive the ideological debate on politics into the new century. Their work affords with a detailed exposition and paradigm of how early radicalism was first modified and then crumbled into conservatism. Perhaps in no other political writers of the time can this geological shift in ideas be observed with such precision. Wordsworth and Coleridge, however, are not just representative of wider movements in thought, but are also profound, often original, political theorists in their own right. They did not just revert to the old, eighteenth century defence of the constitution, but carried over from the 1790's something of the popular impetus of radicalism that was to re-emerge in their thoughts in a new type of conservatism which was not afraid of change or state interventionism to promote the welfare of the people. In redefining conservative thought in this way they prefigured the change to 'liberal' Tory policies

in the 1820's and '30's and they looked forward to some of the social concerns of the Victorian era. In this way they reconciled and fused together the thought of Burke to that of a new era of resurgent radicalism and populism, where the social demands and grievances of the people could no longer be ignored or placated. They helped modify, and so rescue, conservative philosophy for a later age.

SECTION I
THE RETREAT FROM RADICALISM, 1797-1802

CHAPTER I
THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Although Wordsworth and Coleridge were greatly influenced by the major political philosophers of their own day, principally Godwin and Burke, the form and direction of their ideology was, to a large extent, pragmatically determined. The key turning points of the war in Britain and Europe had a profound effect on their thinking. In this chapter we shall examine how the writers responded to the changing nature of the Revolutionary War, focussing particularly on the years after 1797 when their disaffection with the French became manifest. It will be argued that the events of these years finally distanced Wordsworth from France and prepared him to accept a more nationalistic view of politics. Coleridge's hopes for France were severely dented, but survived and grew again. Ideologically this was to place him nearer to the Foxite Opposition which sympathised with the French and sought peace. On a more general level it will be shown, in later chapters, how the events of 1797 - 1802 caused Wordsworth and Coleridge to scrutinise and question all their republican beliefs.

It was the outbreak of war between Britain and France in 1793, rather than the idealism of the Revolution itself, which propelled Wordsworth and Coleridge into writing on politics. Now, Britain was directly affected by events abroad and the early acceptance of the revolution, even in government circles, had evaporated. Thus, their political writing was born out of the need to justify republican ideals to the public, and to themselves, at the very point when those ideals had become identified with the national enemy and the appeal to patriotism was being heard throughout the land. From the start of their political careers Wordsworth and Coleridge were, therefore, on the defensive, trying to justify their beliefs in an increasingly hostile climate, but also entertaining real personal doubts about supporting a cause which ran counter to their natural patriotic feelings and the mood of the country at large. It was a dilemma which faced all radicals at the time. All their political writing was built on this tension between rational belief and innate feeling, between aspiration and practical realities. It forced them to look more critically at their political beliefs and at the actions of France. Indeed, as we shall see, all

their political work is a search to find the political system which best reconciles these seemingly opposite principles. If the outbreak of war first produced this tension, the events of the next few years were to intensify their sense of unease and their doubts about France and its political aims.

Despite later claims that they had supported the French armies and hoped for victory over Britain[1], neither Wordsworth nor Coleridge were ever very enthusiastic about war as a medium for the promotion of libertarian principles. Although they sympathised with the French aim of spreading freedom throughout Europe, they felt that war was a regrettable means to such a worthy end. War could only be countenanced as a limited, defensive measure and reformist methods of change were always preferable. In The Female Vagrant (1791-94), Wordsworth tried to show 'the calamities of war as they affect individuals'.[2] Just at the point when the war was at its most popular in Britain, Wordsworth reminded people of the horrors that accompanied war and argued that its evils always bore most heavily on the poor. The latter were enticed to enlist in the armed forces in order to escape the misery of their present state but they were only rewarded by greater pains and the neglect of an uncaring government. In a stanza which he deleted in 1802 (when he no longer believed a peaceful solution was possible or desirable), the depth of Wordsworth's anti-war sentiment becomes clear.

> Oh! dreadful price of being to resign
> All that is dear in being! better far
> In Want's most lonely cave till death to pine,
> Unseen, unheard, unwatched by any star;
> Or in the streets and walks where proud men are,
> Better our dying bodies to obtrude,
> Then dog-like, wading at the heels of war,
> Protract a curst existence, with the brood
> That lap (their very nourishment!) their brother's blood![3]

War was an unnatural, bestial act, severing man from all his finer, moral feelings. It could never fulfil the French desire to extend liberty to oppressed peoples because war itself enslaved man. Every war was a civil war, pitting brother against brother. Thus, it could never spread the universal, fraternal principles of republicanism since it was intrinsically opposed to them.

In general, Coleridge's views coincided with Wordworth's, though he did recognise that sometimes oppression could only be toppled by war.

He reserved his severest criticism for a war that was waged without principle, but for material advantage - the type of war that Britain was pursuing in the mid-1790's. In The Destiny of Nations (1796) he noted, like Wordsworth, that the poor were always the losers in a war, because they were used for the acquisitive ends of their masters. Even the most principled conflict had a tendency to degenerate into a more mundane contest of ambition and materialism.[4] This is what he feared might happen in France. In 1796, when the Directory rejected the peace overtures of Britain, Coleridge warned France that she was in danger of pursuing the war for acquisitive, rather than republican principles:

> If however you persevere in your intentions, will your soldiers fight with the same enthusiasm for the Ambition as they have done for the liberty of their Country?[5]

He foresaw that, if France continued the war in her current spirit of materialism, she would lose her libertarian impetus and become merely ambitious. There would be a reversion to despotism as the moral will necessary for the sustenance of liberty would have withered away. This, however, was as yet only a warning of the possible and, up to 1798, Coleridge still supported France and her war as long as she proclaimed libertarian aims. He was still able to invoke France as 'Thee, lamb of God! Thee, blameless Prince of Peace!'[6] France was still identified in his mind as the principal force of virtue in Europe, and Britain, instead of being arraigned against her, should have joined her in the fight against oppression.

Wordsworth's greater unease over the war soon made him much more sceptical about the role of France. While the French were on the defensive he gave her his support even though war was unpalatable. From May to July 1794, however, the Republican armies turned to offensive tactics and even the death of Robespierre failed to bring this new phase to an end. The short war Wordsworth had expected had now turned into a more wide-ranging and aggressive conflict. Referring to the French armies in 1794, Wordsworth later stated:

> And now, become oppressors in their turn,
> Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence
> For one of conquest, losing sight of all
> Which they had struggled for ....
> .... But, roused up, I stuck
> More firmly to old tenets, and, to prove
> Their temper, strained them more.[7]

Therefore, as early as 1794, Wordsworth had begun to believe that France was waging a war of conquest and had forfeited the original principles she claimed to be spreading abroad. Wordsworth still maintained his faith in these republican principles; indeed they became stronger in adversity, but the use of the verb 'strain' suggests that the tension between theory and practical reality had become much greater. Support for French principles had ceased to be synonymous with an unconditional support for French actions. The ideological end had become divorced from the physical means and Wordworth would now have to seek out a new context for his political beliefs, independent of the French and their radical methods.

It is clear then that, well before 1798, Wordsworth harboured strong doubts and anxieties over the course of the revolution in France and the methods it had used to promote its ideals. Coleridge also entertained fears that France might become more acquisitive in her aims, but he continued to support her in the war, believing that she was still the best hope for European freedom. He still perceived a unity of French theory and practice. Therefore, when France invaded free, republican Switzerland, in 1798, the event had a different, but analogous, significance for each writer. For Wordsworth, it proved to be the final, decisive confirmation of pre-existing doubts and it opened wide the discrepancy between French republican ideals and aggressive practice. For Coleridge, it was a more immediately traumatic event and his faith in France never fully recovered, though he continued to hope that, under Napoleon, France would still fulfil its promise as the guiding light of republicanism in Europe.

In March 1798 Switzerland was invaded by French armies and the Helvetian Republic was later formed under the domination of France. This action not only confirmed France as a belligerent, acquisitive power, but one that was now openly acting against the very libertarian, republican principles she had previously claimed to be exporting - for Switzerland was one of Europe's oldest and freest republics. The initial horror that overwhelmed Wordsworth, Coleridge and most other British radicals was heightened by other events of that year. The United Irishmen had risen up with the help and support of the French and there was a fear that Britain itself would be invaded. The Government's repressive measures were tightened with the suspension of the Habeas

Corpus Act and Charles James Fox, the political leader whom Wordsworth and Coleridge most admired, talked of retirement. On every side, freedom and justice seemed to be threatened, the prospects for peace and political reform at home were confounded and the independence of their own nation appeared in jeopardy. In this climate of fear and confusion not only were their remaining hopes in France checked, but the radical notions, which had been used to justify the French in their war of 'liberation', seemed fatally flawed.

Although Wordsworth had been more sceptical of French intentions, the invasion still had a particular and poignant significance for him. Wordsworth had visited Switzerland on his walking tour of Europe in 1791-92 and the country stood for him as a special holy place. He found there something approaching an original state of nature where man lived freely in a brotherly rural community under the sight of God. It symbolised the simple, uncorrupted republic for which Wordsworth yearned.[8] The invasion of 1798 was, therefore, not just an affront to Wordsworth's political beliefs, it was an offence against Nature and God. It deeply affected his emotions and began the process whereby Wordsworth not only reasoned, but also felt that the French were pursuing an unnatural and Godless course. He began to identify them and their radical practices with the forces of immorality. The personal, emotive significance of the invasion imprinted these feelings all the more deeply.[9]

Coleridge's stunned, horrified reaction to the French invasion was even more immediate and absolute, because his loyalty to her cause had remained firmer than Wordworth's. Though remaining true to his republican ideals, he now realised, as Wordsworth had done already, that the French could no longer be trusted as the guardians and promoters of those principles. In turning against the French, at this stage, he felt he was being ideologically consistent with his original beliefs, as the advertisement to his poem France: An Ode makes clear:

> The following excellent Ode will be in unison with the feelings of every friend to liberty and foe to oppression; of all who, admiring the French Revolution, detest and deplore the conduct of France towards Switzerland. It is very satisfactory to find as zealous and steady an advocate for freedom as Mr. Coleridge concur with us in condemning the conduct of France towards the Swiss Cantons. Indeed his concurrence is not singular; we know of no Friend to liberty who is not of his opinion.[10]

In conquering Switzerland, a free peaceful brother-republic, France had turned its back on all its own republican ideals and had forfeited the trust of her friends in Britain. She was now no better than the despotic monarchies arraigned against her.[11] Coleridge realised that he had been mistaken ever to believe that liberty could be spread by war. True freedom was only to be found in Nature. It had to grow naturally and was never to be achieved through an unnatural force such as war.[12] Coleridge had now reached the same point that Wordsworth had been moving towards for several years; the dissociation of French radical practice from republican ideals. His despondency was profound and, for a time, like Wordsworth, he despaired of ever finding a political method which could change society for the better.

The one hope that Wordsworth still entertained was that the advent of Napoleon might return France to her original principles. He always maintained a faith in the power of the individual to effect great change. This idea owed much to Burke, who believed in the capacity of one exceptional man to moralise the world. In The Prelude Wordsworth stated that he had believed 'the virtue of one paramount mind'[13] might return France to her republican ideals. Just as he believed the Revolution had been ill-served by its earlier leaders like Robespierre, however, so Wordsworth soon identified Napoleon as another political saviour who had turned out to be as evil and dangerous as his predecessors. He realised it was foolish to expect Napoleon, who had only been schooled in war, to re-dedicate France to liberty and justice. Good statesmen were not formed in military academies, but were reared on domestic affections and moral duties.[14] These were to be values which found an important place in Wordsworth's future political philosophy. By pursuing even more ambitious ends, Napoleon made the prospect of republican renewal remoter still. Napoleon therefore placed his hope for the future in the judgement of the ordinary citizen:

> Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope
> Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
> The Destiny of Man, and live in hope.[15]

If this period saw the end of Wordsworth's remaining hopes in France, however, it did not see a reciprocal revival of his confidence in Britain. In 1802 he still blamed Britain for the downfall of libertarianism in France. If she and her allies had not provoked

France into war, then the seed of republican liberty would have grown more successfully.[16] Pitt's government undermined liberty and justice abroad, as well as at home, through its use of repressive measures, spies and informers.[17] Wordsworth saw little to recommend in the political actions of either France or Britain - they were both oppressive, corrupt powers. Nevertheless, as Napoleon's despotic control and desire for conquest increased, Wordsworth did begin to make distinctions between the two powers. Whereas France seemed irrevocably lost, Britain continued to oppose a conquering nation which had actively crushed freedom in Switzerland. Thus, even if Britain was not a conscious force for liberty and justice, she was not like France, a positive force which denied them. Britain retained the potential to do good and, even if only by default, her position was more admirable. Addressing Britain, he wrote,

> But worse, more ignorant in love and hate,
> Far - far more abject, is thine Enemy:
> Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
> Of thy offences be a heavy weight:
> Oh grief that Earth's best hopes rest all with Thee![18]

Wordsworth was now convinced that, while far from perfect, Britain was the lesser evil and deserved support in the war, though this view was qualified by the regret that the only hope for peace and liberty should reside with such an oppressive power. Although he still professed faith in republican ideals, the radical methods which the French had employed to serve these ends, had proved false. After 1798 Wordsworth was to seek a new political basis from which republicanism could grow more surely.

At first, Coleridge's view of France and Britain after 1798 coincided with that of his friend. After the initial shock of the invasion had passed, however, Coleridge developed a more considered and complex response. His poem, Fears in Solitude (1798), reveals his profound disillusion with the French, and it is critical of Britain's tyrannical policies, though it also argues that support for Britain in the war was justified. Britain promoted war in foreign lands, yet she had never experienced the horrors of that warfare on her own soil. When British soldiers were killed abroad, the public were anaesthetised from the carnage by their distance from the event and by bland newspaper accounts which abstracted death and suffering into statistics. In this

way, Britain had become a callous, indifferent and oppressive power. Its moral feelings and responsibilities had withered away.[19] Coleridge, however, hoped that the threat of an invasion of Britain in 1798 might be a chastening experience which would cause her to reflect on past wrongs and remind her of the moral values which she had so neglected. By encountering the prospect of war-time horrors which she had made others suffer, Britain might recover some of her old humane, libertarian instincts. This increasing emphasis on the need for a more moral basis to politics was to be an important feature in the revised philosophy of both Wordsworth and Coleridge in the coming years.

If Britain was temporarily sunk in immorality and repression, however, the condition of France was even worse: she seemed beyond redemption. France had not merely forsaken her principles; she now consciously promoted evil. Coleridge therefore now felt justified in supporting Britain in what appeared to be a war of self-defence against an oppressive power: the parallel to France's position in 1793.

> make yourselves pure!
> Stand forth! be men! repel an impious foe,
> Impious and false, a light yet cruel race,
> Who laugh away all virtue, mingling mirth
> With deeds of murder; and still promising
> Freedom, themselves too sensual to be free,
> Poison life's amities, and cheat the heart
> Of faith and quiet hope, and all that soothes,
> And all that lifts the spirit![20]

Coleridge's patriotic instincts had revived and, although he was far from being uncritical of Britain, she now seemed more capable of moral good.

It would appear then that the events of 1798 propelled Coleridge into an ideological position similar to that of Wordsworth's. Fears in Solitude, however, was written at the height of the invasion scare and, understandably, Coleridge's patriotic feelings were intense. Once the alarm subsided, he adopted a more considered view of events. In the following years his support for Britain waned and his faith in France recovered. Two factors aided this process: Britain's immoral conduct in the war and Coleridge's faith in Napoleon.

In his allegorical poem, Recantation, Illustrated in the Story of the Mad Ox, Coleridge argued that Britain had caused France to become an oppressive power which now threatened Europe. Like the Whigs,

Coleridge believed that Britain was responsible for the failure of Revolutionary ideals, for the terror, and for the subsequent despotism of France. Instead of treating the infant republic sympathetically, Britain and her allies had goaded her into excessive behaviour and, finally, into war. Mistaking the ecstatic idealism of the revolution for aggressive tendencies, Britain had provoked violence in France. She had treated France like a dangerous mad ox and, in a self-fulfilling prophecy, that is what France had become. Goaded into madness, the ox in the poem kills its master Lewis (Louis XVI), creates anarchy and bloodshed in the town (France) and destroys the hedges of its farm (spreads war beyond its national borders). In this way Britain and the other monarchies (the 'publicans') were the root cause of all the war and oppression that had overwhelmed Europe in the 1790's.

> The publicans rush'd from the Crown,
> "Halloo! hamstring him! cut him down!"
> THEY DROVE THE POOR OX MAD.[21]

In the years between 1798 and 1802, Coleridge became convinced that Britain, the ultimate source of all the tragedy, was still perpetrating this war for her own ends. In his poem, The Devil's Thoughts,[22] Britain is a land where the Devil feels quite at home: truth is repressed, war and vice encouraged, the people enslaved and the political system is corrupted. At the end of the poem this evil land proves too much even for the Devil and he flees, for safety, back to Hell! When, in 1800, France desired peace but Britain procrastinated, this view of Britain as an evil, belligerent power was confirmed in his eyes. Britain was prolonging the conflict in the hope of economic gain at the expense of her rival. Whereas Wordsworth, in these years, saw war against France as increasingly justified, Coleridge believed that only peace could restore good government in the two countries and that Britain was the chief obstacle to this aim.[23] Coleridge's first patriotic flush of 1798 had paled and a more critical stance had been re-adopted.

As Coleridge's hopes for Britain plummeted so his sympathies for France rekindled. Napoleon was to be a key figure in shaping Coleridge's political ideology, just as he was for Wordsworth. Coleridge's daughter, Sara, later testified to Napoleon's importance in her father's thinking: as the nature of Napoleon's leadership changed so did Coleridge's allegiance to France and his regard for republicanism.[24] Napoleon's actions up to 1802, which had so depressed Wordsworth, caused a revival

of Coleridge's faith in France. He believed that under its new leader, France did sincerely desire peace. Since her fall from grace had been initiated by external pressure, the release of this pressure (through peace) might well see her return to her republican ideals. Napoleon seemed the embodiment of this promise.

Napoleon proclaimed his desire for peace from 1799 onwards and, though he had some despotic tendencies, he also showed some signs of revitalising the early republican spirit of the Revolution. Napoleon had swept aside the corruption of the Directory and set a more moral tone. Cautiously, Coleridge commended his work:

> Menaced as France is at present, many sincere lovers of Freedom may perceive, in the usurpation of the modern Pisistratus,* such temporary advantages as reconcile them to a temporary submission. Other measures have been adopted, favourable to morals and Civil Liberty.[25]

* A tyrant of Athens (d. 527 BC) who permitted free religious worship and encouraged the arts and scholarship.

Coleridge's tempered respect grew as he studied the Constitution of Year VIII which Napoleon had helped to frame with the Abbé Sieyès. Though far from ideal, the constitution was no consecration of dictatorial power and even the mock Tribunate still conducted real, open-ended debates. Thus, there were elements of freedom and vitality within the constitution which Coleridge regarded as hopeful. The deomocratic element within the system was still a living force and, in peacetime, might well flourish again.[26] This was the promise that Napoleon's leadership held forth.

Although Napoleon could never be a wholly admirable man, since he had usurped power in the Brumaire coup, his firm leadership was needed in France after the anarchy of the mid-1790's. It could also provide a base from which republicanism could grow more securely. Coleridge admired Napoleon

> in the increasing conviction that it had become good policy to exchange the forms of political freedom for the realities of civil security, in order to make a real political freedom possible at some future period.[27]

Like Godwin, Coleridge saw Napoleon as an auspicious figure, a man of genius who could reinstate republicanism and freedom on surer foundations.[28]

Therefore, until 1802, Coleridge concluded that, of the two evils, France rather than Britain still held forth the greater promise of realising liberty and a just political system. In this view of the two countries, Coleridge identifies more closely with Fox than Wordsworth did. Coleridge was a journalist for the Opposition newspaper, The Morning Post, and, although he never subscribed to any party positions himself, there is no doubt that in his critical attitude to Britain, his hopes for France, and his admiration for Napoleon, his views are similar to those of Fox.

The events of 1798 - 1802 had a significant, but different, impact on both poets. Wordsworth's pre-existing doubts about France were confirmed and, although he saw little to commend in the policies of either nation, his sympathies undoubtedly lay with Britain as the best hope for a freer world. She deserved support in the war. For Coleridge, the invasion of 1798 was more of an unexpected, disillusioning blow to his faith in France, though he subsequently recovered some of his earlier sympathy. Coleridge was also critical of both countries, but he felt that the spirit of republicanism and liberty was still alive in the French political system. He wished to see the victory of neither side, but, instead, a mutual agreement of peace terms after which France could realise her republican sympathies in a securer, more orderly fashion. Both poets still professed belief in republican ideals, but they wished to attain these by less radical, more gradual, means. They had to be adapted to the existing state of society and be rooted in its moral values. Wordsworth had detached these ideals from the fortunes of France and was now ready to recognise some worth in Britain's natural way of life, her traditional habits and customs. He, therefore, tried to ground his republican ideals in the countryside of his birth and the state of man in that rural society. Coleridge was also to be influenced by these ideas of Wordsworth, but he increasingly sought a solution in Christian teaching which knew no national boundaries and which was as applicable to France as to Britain. Even more important to Coleridge, than the founding of a republican government, was the foundation of all forms of government on a basis of moral law and Christian belief.

It is now time to consider how Wordsworth and Coleridge tried to find a new, more permanent basis for their republican beliefs in the light of their experience of domestic and foreign affairs, between 1797 and 1802.

CHAPTER II

THE CRITIQUE OF RADICALISM

The failure of France to establish a permanent, stable republic caused Wordsworth and Coleridge to scrutinise the radical precepts on which it had been based. They tried to discover why the radical approach had proved to be such a poor handmaiden to republican ideals. After 1798 both writers still professed democratic sympathies, but they searched for a new ideological framework or 'home' where republicanism could grow naturally and more securely.

In reviewing the history of the French Republic in the 1790's, Wordsworth and Coleridge isolated a number of aspects in radical thinking which had proved to be flawed. Firstly, the provenance of the republic in revolution, violence and passion seemed infinitely regrettable. The use of force had resulted in a neglect of fellow feeling and moral values. Secondly, the appeal to abstract reason had proved impractical and undesirable. In a society where a person had a natural right to exercise his own reason unrestrained by social or moral duties, selfish, excessive behaviour would result. Man was an imperfect creature and his reason could not be relied upon to guide him. Reason itself was now seen as an abstract, meaningless concept. Thirdly, they were troubled by the atheistic element in radical thinking. This denied the essential God-given moral laws which underpinned society and government and elevated their purpose. Lastly, Wordsworth and Coleridge criticised the way French radicals had turned their backs on social habits and traditions. By denying past customs, they divorced themselves from much that had proved good and useful. By imposing a republican system on society without regard for its familiar traditions, they had fatally weakened its basis. The French had been unprepared to accept a radical, new system that bore little relation to their present social experience. Wordsworth and Coleridge were to argue that a new political system had to be carefully grafted on to existing forms in order to grow and flourish naturally.

These points will now be investigated more fully to chart how Wordsworth and Coleridge changed from a radical appeal to Nature as the original state of man, where he could best exercise his pure reason, to the more Burkean appeal to Nature as the habitual condition of man

in society, bound by moral laws.

(a) Feeling and Reason

Wordsworth and Coleridge had never been happy with the idea of using revolution or violence as a means of effecting political change. Like other British radicals of the time they approved of revolution theoretically, but were reluctant to countenance its practice except under extreme circumstances. Although Paine supported revolutionary action to unseat despotism, he favoured a bloodless coup. John Thelwall, a radical friend of the two poets, was more in favour of a gradual transformation of society. Wordsworth and Coleridge welcomed the overthrow of tyranny in France, but did not endorse the revolutionary violence by which it was achieved, far less the Terror which followed. Both poets had hoped that violent tactics would be controlled and used only sparingly. The need for them would soon wither away as the new republic established itself.[1] The Terror, followed by the more aggressive use of war, however, proved this to be a vain hope. Violence had destroyed the same republican principles which it had been designed to serve.

Wordsworth noted how violence, once used, even in a limited way, tended to escalate and become uncontrollable. Violent revolution was an un-thinking response to political problems; it enforced change on society without necessarily addressing or answering the people's real grievances. In The Borderers (1796) Wordsworth described how the recourse to violence seldom served its ends, no matter how principled these were:

> Then grasp our swords and rush upon a cure
> That flatters us, because it asks not thought:
> The deeper malady is better hid;
> The world is poisoned at the heart.[2]

At best, violence was a temporary expedient, but, by itself, it could affect nothing substantial or permanent. Instead, violence tended to become an end in itself, a substitute for real reform. Wordsworth, influenced by Godwin, was to turn to more gradual, educative methods of change which were ultimately more profound and lasting.

Coleridge was a little more willing than Wordsworth to countenance collective revolutionary action, even though he preferred change to be effected within the bounds of the constitution.[3] In the final Act of

his tragedy, Osorio (1797), revolution is justified as long as it is bloodless, limited in extent and pursued in the service of free principles against intransigent oppression. None the less, by the time the play was produced for the stage, in 1813, as Remorse, it was this final Act which had been most altered. By then, revolution was no longer regarded as a possible panacea for a country's ills; it merely bred further violence. Reviewing the events of the 1790's Coleridge concluded that the use of revolution and violence had fatally undermined republican ideals. Preoccupied with violent means, the French had neglected their principled ends. Indeed, fine ideals had become a pretext for the propagation of violence and vice. In 1803 Coleridge noted how, 'The Name of Liberty, which at the commencement of the French Revolution was both the occasion and the pretext of unnumbered crimes and horrors.'[4] Coleridge came to the same conclusion as Wordsworth, that the only sure way of realising republican ideals was by evolutionary reform: a means which would serve one's ends rather than compete with them.

If violent revolution had proved to be an ineffective method for implementing or sustaining republican principles, however, it was not the sole cause of failure. The American republic had also been established through revolution and war, yet Coleridge's hero, Washington, had succeeded in curbing its violence and the republic now rested on a peaceful, secure basis. Why, then, had the violence in France become uncontrollable and had ended in despotism?

Both writers blamed the over-passionate, irresponsible spirit of the French radicals. After centuries under the yoke of absolutism, the French had responded to their newly-won freedom in an over-emotional, unthinking way. Initially, this had been understandable and excusable, but the violence had proceeded unchecked. A volatile state of competing interests had resulted, with little thought given to the general moral good. At first, Wordsworth had been impressed with the joyful exuberance of the early Revolution. In a letter written during his continental tour of 1790, he wrote to his sister Dorothy:

> We had also perpetual occasion to observe that cheerfulness and sprightliness for which the French have always been remarkable. But I must remind you that we crossed it at the time when the whole nation was mad with joy, in consequence of the revolution. It was a most

> interesting period to be in France, and we had many
> delightful scenes where the interest of the picture
> was owing solely to this cause.[5]

Although this seemed, at the time, a perfect image of an ideal society, Wordsworth realised, as the decade proceeded, that unchecked emotion was not enough to sustain a free state. Unless a republican system was rooted in a less volatile, more responsible spirit, it was weak and easily overthrown or corrupted.

In 1802 he looked back on that early 1790 tour which he had undertaken with such hope and he discovered a hollowness in the spirit he had once admired:

> Jones! as from Calais southward you and I
> Went pacing side by side, this public way
> Streamed with the pomp of a too-credulous day,
> When faith was pledged to new-born liberty:
> A homeless sound of joy was in the sky.[6]

The joy of that early republican spirit had found no permanent home. Based only on the naive and exuberant emotions of the moment, the republic had proved insecure and was easily perverted by corrupt leaders such as Robespierre and Napoleon. Early ideals had been grasped eagerly, passionately, but unthinkingly; they had established no permanent home in the minds of the people. It was this more reasoned, responsible attachment that Wordsworth sought after 1779: a stable context for republican values.

Coleridge also blamed excess of feeling for the failure of the republic. It has been noted how he symbolised the early Revolution as an exuberant ox, provoked into real madness by the hostile attitude of other European countries.[7] Looking back on the Terror from the vantage point of 1798, it seemed that republican ideals had been betrayed and obscured by the passion of the participants:

> Though all the fierce and drunken passions wove
> A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's dream!
> Ye storms, that round the dawning East assembled,
> The Sun was rising, though ye hid his light![8]

The original promise, or light, of the Revolution had become obscured by emotional indifference and irresponsibility. Coleridge now believed that the French were 'too sensual to be free'.[9] All restraints, rational and moral, had been loosened, liberty had become licence and, in the

midst of anarchy, the seeds of another despotism were sown.

Clearly, both Wordsworth and Coleridge believed the new republic had proved weak and malleable because it had been adopted in an overly emotional spirit which had not engaged the people at a deeper, thinking level. Man had to exercise reason over his passions. The experience of the 1790's, however, taught the two poets that an appeal to reason was also fraught with danger and did not necessarily guarantee the stable, responsible climate in which republicanism could prosper.

Among the new radical thinkers of the 1790's some had appealed to reason rather than the ancient constitution as the basis for their reforming principles. In The Prelude (1805) Wordsworth acknowledged how Godwin's rational beliefs had seemed to offer a more stable basis for the republic than a reliance on volatile and easily corruptible emotion:

> This was the time when, all things tending fast
> To depravation, the philosophy
> That promised to abstract the hopes of man
> Out of his feelings, to be fixed thenceforth
> For ever in a purer element,
> Found ready welcome.[10]

Although Wordsworth was undoubtedly attracted by the appeal to reason, he soon saw that a world based solely on rational principles was not only unimaginable in practical terms, but also undesirable. Such a world would be a cold, heartless place where individual rights would take the place of necessary moral duties and fellow feeling. In A Poet's Epitaph (1798/99), he attacked the self-centredness of the pure rationalist:

> he has neither eyes nor ears;
> Himself his world, and his own God;
>
> One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
> Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;
> A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
> An intellectual All-in-all![11]

In this image, rational man is uninterested in the feelings of others and is responsible only to himself. Each man, being his own God, could act without social or moral restraint. Here lay the origins of the enormities of the French Terror and anarchy, carried out in the name of Reason. Abstract reason had not controlled men's passions, as the radicals claimed it would, because, by making the individual into a God,

it sanctioned irresponsible behaviour. The idea of rational man being accorded God-like status, also offended Wordsworth's Christian beliefs and distanced him further from radical circles. Although Wordsworth believed that the appeal to abstract reason was as flawed as the reliance on passion, he could still perceive the worth of reason conjoined with feeling and dedicated to a moral end. Even his celebrated 'anti-Godwinian' drama, The Borderers (1796), was not so much a criticism of the use of reason, as an attack on the appeal to abstract reason which could then be used to justify gross behaviour. Even although Wordsworth later came to realise that the use of reason alone did not guarantee responsible action, it was still to figure largely in his political philosophy. None the less, as we shall see, it had to be used in a moral spirit. This was a distinction that Godwin himself was to make in subsequent revisions of Political Justice and also in his later novels.[12]

Coleridge met Godwin in 1794 and, for a time, he was influenced by his ideas. Godwin's apparently anti-religious views formed a barrier to their friendship, but, in later years, Coleridge prompted the philosopher to adopt a more openly sympathetic approach to religion and the two writers maintained a friendly relationship all their lives.[13] The most startling evidence of Godwin's early influence on Coleridge is the scheme he planned with Robert Southey for establishing a utopian community based on rationalist principles. In 1794, the prospect of such a society seemed the ideal answer to the feverish anarchy of the French radicals. Rather than impose radical change on existing society as the French had done, Coleridge attempted to set up an alternative community in America on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania where he would be near the exiled Dr. Priestley, one of his radical heroes.[14] In this 'pantisocracy' a small group of men and women would live self-sufficiently, labouring part of the day in the fields which would be communally-owned. In this rationalist world of freedom and egalitarianism, there would be no need for formal government and crime would vanish. Living in perfect harmony, far away from the corrupting environment of the Old World, the ideal of human perfectibility might be attained.[15] This deeply Godwinian notion of society was evoked by Coleridge in Religious Musings (1794-96):

> each heart
> Self-governed, the vast family of love
> Raised from the common earth by common toil
> Enjoy the equal produce.[16]

This pantisocratic scheme collapsed mainly because of Southey's loss of interest, but the concept of such a perfect communitarian existence remained a potent ideal for Coleridge in the years that followed. Echoes of it are to be found in his self-sufficient family life at Nether Stowey and, in the later 1790's, when the Coleridges, Wordsworths and Southeys lived a closely-knit existence in the Lake District. The unattainable ideal of a lost Eden also haunts much of Wordsworth's post-Miltonic epic, The Prelude. After 1794, however, Coleridge realised that a community based on abstract rational principles was ill-fitted to the practical realities of the everyday world. In 1795 he wrote to Southey of pantisocracy: 'it's realisation is distant - perhaps a miraculous Millenium."[17] Pantisocracy had failed because of a lack of will among its participants. The dramatic shift to a society based on reason had only appealed to one aspect of man's nature; it had not sufficiently touched his feelings and habitual affections. By the end of the decade Coleridge's organic view of life led him to discount any political theories that appealed only to reason and not to the whole of man's complex nature:

> We approve not of that proud philosophy, which addresses itself to men as to beings of pure intellect, and would destroy their passions and their affections. It is unsuited to our nature, and must therefore be false and dangerous.[18]

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge believed that the emphasis on individual reason in French philosophy had led to a neglect of man's moral nature and sense of duty. Although reason was necessary to control the passions, it had to be employed with a feeling for the others in society. Without this degree of moral restraint, the rationalist principles of the French had produced the selfish, violent, irresponsible behaviour witnessed during the Terror, as well as the moral laxity of the Directory.[19]

By the end of the 1790's, therefore, both writers were prepared to base their political philosophy in an appeal to the whole of man's nature: to his reason, to his feelings, but also to his moral duties to the rest of society.

(b) The Appeal to Nature

> Let Nature be your teacher ....
> One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man;

Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.[20]

Perceiving that an appeal to abstract reason or emotion did not ensure stable or responsible action, Wordsworth and Coleridge sought a new basis for their political philosophy which would be rational, and feeling, but also moral. They appealed to Nature both as a physical home for their republican principles, but also as an agency which entwined man's feelings and his intellect, thus helping to produce a more moral vision of the world. The whole of man's complex nature, as an individual and as part of the social community, was thus awakened. It will be argued below that this appeal to Nature was not a Rousseauist appeal to a pre-social state of nature, but that, after 1797, both writers' concept of Nature was nearer to that of Burke: the natural state of man was to live in civil society.[21]

After living in the West Country and then travelling to Germany together, Wordsworth, Coleridge and their families took up residence in the Lake District in 1799/1800. This settlement in the country does not represent a retreat from politics as much as a retreat from the disillusioning experience of the radical approach to politics. The countryside of the lakes did not merely repair their broken spirits or provide them with a more distanced vantage point on politics, it also became the new practical home for their political philosophy. If the countryside appeared to them to be the natural place to turn to in this time of political uncertainty, perhaps it also held the key to resolving the problems of society as a whole. Until Coleridge's departure for Malta, in 1804, the two writers, their families, the Southeys and many visiting friends lived a rural existence that was close-knit and, at times, socially entangled. In some respects their life, at this time, resembled a less radical version of Coleridge's pantisocratic ideal. Indeed, their friend, John Thelwall, approved the hope that one properly united community of like-minded people might grow from this informal grouping.[22] They were all interested in libertarian ideals, democratic systems and aesthetic values. They had also lived through the disillusionments of the 1790's and, instead of trying to establish alternative societies, Wordsworth and Coleridge were now more interested in engaging with the practical realities of existing life. The society of the countryside seemed nearest to that original, lost Garden of Eden; a state which had once seemed recoverable in the early 1790's. This community of the Lakes and its values now seemed the most

natural state of society.

In the poetry between 1797 and 1804, Wordsworth and Coleridge compared town and country life in order to demonstrate the superior virtues and values of rural existence. Following the tradition of eighteenth century 'Country' ideologies, Wordsworth saw the city as a corrupting influence. In Michael (1800), the young son, Luke, leaves the countryside to work in London. Soon city life begins to infect his free, honest country soul:

> Meantime Luke began
> To slacken in his duty, and at length
> He in the dissolute city gave himself
> To evil courses.[23]

The temptations of the city caused men to neglect moral domestic responsibilities. People became alienated and all the natural ties of duty and affection were forgotten. Although London had, at first, filled Wordsworth with wonder and awe, he soon recognised this to be a surface charm concealing the true estrangement of urban life:

> Above all, one thought
> Baffled my understanding, how men lived
> Even next-door neighbours, as we say, yet still
> Strangers, and knowing not each other's name.[24]

In London, the first truly vast city, the individual was cast adrift, divorced from the natural bonds of traditional society. Its pleasures were purely sensual; it contained little of profound moral worth.[25] In London there were few of the traditional habits, feelings and customs that had been a part of Wordsworth's rural upbringing. It was not 'natural' life:

> And all the ballast of familiar life -
> The present, and the past, hope, fear, all stays,
> All laws of acting, thinking, speaking man -
> Went from me, neither knowing me, nor known.[26]

'Natural' life is now identified as that of the secure traditional world of the rural communities - man as part of a time-honoured social process, rather than any Rousseauist, pre-societal state of nature.

The image of the city unites all the features of radical society which Wordsworth now deplored in revolutionary France. The city was a 'thickening hubbub'[27] of alienated, self-concerned individuals, uninterested in the welfare of their brothers,

only protective of their own rights. In this morally-disconnected society it was inevitable that people would tend to violence and vice in the prosecution of their own interests. The 'soul's beauty'[28] had been overthrown and in London, that Godless place, Wordsworth hears for the first time a woman swear. Just as Paris had been the birthplace of the Revolution's hostility and anarchy, so cities came to symbolise, for Wordsworth, all the worst aspects of radicalism, all the faults that had betrayed republican ideals. In seeking a new home for republican values, it was only appropriate that Wordsworth should turn to the countryside and to Nature. His 'retiral' there, was not a retreat from the problems of society, but a turn towards a new basis for their solution.

When Wordsworth does detect any virtue in city life it is significant that it is only at those moments when the forces of Nature seem still to be alive in the urban environment. In The Prelude Wordsworth remarked how Coleridge, as a London schoolboy, was able to keep faith with the benign, moral influences of his country childhood only by gazing up at the sky far above the city.[29] Thus, he is redeemed. Wordsworth himself was able to emerge untainted from his experience of London only because he had been schooled in Nature:

> The spirit of Nature was upon me here,
> The soul of beauty and enduring life
> Was present as a habit, and diffused -
> Through meagre lines and colours, and the press
> Of self-destroying, transitory things -
> Composure and ennobling harmony.[30]

Wordsworth retains his sense of permanent, traditional, moral values through the habitual influence of Nature on his life. It will be argued, later in this chapter, that this emphasis on habit provided the element of ballast in his politics which the radical, a-historical approach had denied. Although Wordsworth did acknowledge that London, as an ancient, national and imperial capital, did inspire a greater sense of awe and respect than most newer cities, even London could never contain the more profound, habitual truths only discoverable in Nature.[31]

Between the years 1797 and 1804, Coleridge was much influenced by Wordsworth's view of country life vis à vis the city. In Frost at Midnight (1798), Coleridge used the same image of himself as a luckless, city-educated child which Wordsworth used in The Prelude a year later.[32]

Coleridge argues that his new-born son, Berkeley, will enjoy far greater advantages because he is to be reared in the country:

> For I was reared
> In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
> And saw naught lovely but the sky and stars,
> But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
> By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
> Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
> Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
> And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
> The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
> Of that eternal language, which thy God
> Utters, who from eternity doth teach
> Himself in all, and all things in himself.
> Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
> Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.[33]

Rural existence is here imbued with Christian moral influences and Nature is the vital channel through which these benevolences can be imbibed - a channel that is closed to a city-bred child.

Coleridge's perception of the dichotomy between town and country, however, was not as absolute as Wordsworth's and was to diminish as his friend's influence waned. Although Coleridge lived in the Lake District at this time, he spent most of the rest of his life in the city or travelling abroad. He more readily accepted cities as flawed, but intrinsic, parts of Britain's new society. Cities had become part of man's 'natural' social state and could not be ignored. In Reflections On Having Left A Place of Retirement (1795), Nature is a morally restorative, soothing influence on the Bristol trader, but town life could not be forsaken. To bury oneself in the sublime countryside, 'while my unnumber'd brethren toil'd and bled',[34] was to live a dream, secluded from the realities which faced a growing part of society. He urged country dwellers not to live an ostrich-like existence, but to pay heed to the cities and help the people there:

> I therefore go, and join head, heart and hand,
> Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight
> Of Science, Freedom and The Truth in Christ.[35]

Cities could not be ignored as unnatural excrescences on the face of humanity. They had to be accepted as part of society, but had also to be reformed to allow an infusion of the educative, liberating values to be found in the country.

While Wordsworth's conception of 'natural society' is one distinctly

rooted in rural existence, Coleridge's definition embraces all of society - both rural and urban. Both writers however were agreed that in Nature was to be discovered the fountain of all deep thoughts, feelings and moral values. Here was located the basis for their political philosophy. In the two-part Prelude of 1799, Wordsworth remarked how, despite their different upbringing, both friends had converged on this point:

> Thou, my friend, wast reared
> In the great city, 'mid far other scenes,
> But we by different roads at length have gained
> The self-same bourne ....
> .... For thou last sought
> The truth in solitude, and thou art one
> The most intense of Nature's worshippers,
> In many things my brother, chiefly here
> In this my deep devotion.[36]

But what did Wordsworth and Coleridge mean when they appealed to 'Nature' as the basis of their political ideology? In what way was their appeal different to that of the radicals in the early 1790's?

In the years after 1797 Wordsworth and Coleridge did not conceive of Nature in the unrestrained, Dionysian way of Rousseau. They believed this had led to the licence and anarchy of the Revolutionary era. Nor did they adhere to the more mechanical, austere concept of Nature which Voltaire had held. Although their idea of Nature was mostly original, it owed something to Burke's view that it was a property which activated the mind and had sublime qualities. For Wordsworth and Coleridge, the appeal to Nature involved a reciprocity between the thoughts and feelings of man and the natural world. When man opened his being to the benign influences of Nature, or 'communed' with it, he became part of Nature itself. During these intense moments of being, which Wordsworth described as 'spots of time' and for which Coleridge used the metaphor of the Aeolian harp, man's deepest emotions were stirred. These feelings were not just received passively, but had to be controlled and given practical direction by the rational faculties which Nature also enlivened. The action that resulted from such a process was both moral and habitual. God's laws informed all of natural creation and were ever-present there and so, in communing with Nature, one imbibed a force

that was moral in spirit and habitual to all men. Therefore, it can be argued, in appealing to Nature, Wordsworth and Coleridge were advocating a basis for their political philosophy that was feeling, yet rationally controlled, moral and habitual: in answer to the purely rational, self-interested appeal to Nature that the radicals had made. The rights which flowed from this philosophical stance would now be more social, than individual or abstract.

In the early 1790's, Wordsworth had appealed to a Rousseauist pre-societal state of nature as the basis for his political beliefs. In this original state man was free to obey the dictates of his reason and he possessed certain inalienable natural rights. In 1793 he wrote,

> Once Man entirely free, alone and wild,
> Was bless'd as free - for he was Nature's child.
> He, all superior but his God disdain'd,
> Walked none restraining, and by none restrain'd,
> Confessed no law but what his reason taught,
> Did all he wish'd, and wish'd but what he ought.[37]

As we have seen, however, by the end of the decade, Wordsworth found this purely emotional response to Nature to be dangerous. The unrestrained enthusiasm of the early Revolution had soon led to excessive passions and immoral, irresponsible behaviour. The fine feelings inspired by Nature had to be controlled by the rational faculties, but had also to be morally directed. They had to serve society as a whole and not become a licence for any kind of individual behaviour.

Wordsworth described his later move towards a restrained appeal to Nature that was more social and moral in impetus, in Tintern Abbey (1798):

> - That time is past,
> And all its aching joys are now no more,
> And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
> Faint I, nor mourn nor murmer: other gifts
> Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
> Abundant recompense. For I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
> The still, sad music of humanity,
> Not harsh nor grating, although of ample power
> To chasten and subdue.[38]

Here Wordsworth appeals to Nature as a force which leads him to consider other people. It does not just inspire the unthinking joy of the past, but must awaken men's minds as well as arouse their emotions. Nature

must not be passively imbibed, but must be 'half-created'[39] in the minds which it had activated. In this feeling, but also rational, response to Nature, Wordsworth had learned to love his fellow man and to think less of his own individual joys and interests. Through Nature he had become a social man.

Wordsworth believed that this intense experience of Nature and its enlivening powers occurred at certain key moments in a person's life that remained continuing, habitual sources of inspiration. In The Prelude (1799) he stated,

> There are in our existence spots of time
> Which with distinct pre-eminence retain
> A fructifying virtue, whence, depressed
> By trivial occupations and the round
> Of ordinary intercourse, our minds -
> Especially the imaginative power -
> Are nourished and invisibly repaired;
> Such moments chiefly seem to have their date
> In our first childhood.[40]

These 'spots of time', when man communed with Nature, inspired his finest thoughts and feelings and helped to reconcile him to life. Coleridge's memory of his moral youth had nourished his soul while he stayed in London.[41] In this way the spots of time proved to be habitual sources of inspiration, virtue and restrained, reflective behaviour. Wordsworth argued that since this was so, an appeal to nature was the best practical guide for all human action:

> being versed
> In living Nature, I had there a guide
> Which opened frequently my eyes, else shut,
> A standard which was usefully applied,
> Even when unconsciously, to other things
> Which less I understood.[42]

But if the thoughts and feelings derived from Nature were to inform all human behaviour in this useful manner, what were these lessons?

Wordsworth believed that this communion with Nature was primarily a moral process. When he contemplated natural scenes his thoughts and emotions were given a sense of moral purpose. In Tintern Abbey he declared he was,

> well pleased to recognise
> In nature and the language of the sense
> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being.[43]

The essential principles of moral law could be sensed when man communed with Nature for, in a pantheistic sense, God's Will was present in Nature, indivisibly: 'Nature's self which is the breath of God'.[44] This appeal to the moral law discoverable in Nature was an appeal to a higher law than that of man or the claims of reason. It encouraged people to look beyond the narrow self-interest of the natural rights school towards Christian ideals and the welfare of society. It inspired a sense of duty, justice and love of one's fellow man, as 'Peter Bell', the sinner, discovers when he repents and finds mercy through God:

> His heart is opening more and more;
> A holy sense pervades his mind;
> He feels what he for human-kind
> Had never felt before.[45]

It will be argued later in the chapter that the rights which flowed from this moral source were no longer individual, inalienable rights, but were held commensurate with moral duties and social limitations. These 'natural' rights were the moral rights of social man.

Wordsworth however still believed that a republican system held out the best prospect of achieving this moral basis for society. He believed that republicanism was, in essence, the simplest and most Christian system of government. In The Prelude (1805) Wordsworth envisaged the result of a world perfectly schooled in Nature:

> and over all
> Should be a healthy sound simplicity,
> A seemly plainness - name it as you will,
> Republican or pious.[46]

In his appeal to Nature, Wordsworth had discovered the ideal, secure, moral basis for his republican principles.

The appeal to Nature was not, in itself, such a fundamental element in Coleridge's thinking as it was for Wordsworth. More important to Coleridge were the laws of God which informed all of life, both natural and human. These were to provide the essential basis for Coleridge's political philosophy.

Wordsworth's view of Nature did, however, influence Coleridge at least initially. In The Eolian Harp (1795), Coleridge conceived all of animated nature as 'organic harps'[47] which interacted and enlivened each other. It is an image that parallels Wordsworth's notion of man

in communication with nature and, similarly, a Divine 'breeze'[48] or breath informs the whole process. Like Wordsworth, however, Coleridge believed that it was not enough for man merely to open himself up to natural influences in this purely emotional way. Significantly, the breezes only cross a 'passive brain'[49], inspire 'idle flitting phantasies'[50] and then pass on, undetained. Thus Coleridge suggests that a feeling response to Nature is insubstantial; it evoked no lasting or responsible moral spirit. Three years later, in Fears in Solitude, he argued in similar vein to Wordsworth, that one had to respond to Nature, not only in this emotional sense, but also rationally. From this deeper, more considered appreciation of Nature, one's moral spirit would become inspired. Nature was thus capable of invigorating man's emotional, rational and moral senses. From Nature, Coleridge had

> drunk in all my intellectual life,
> All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
> All adoration of the God in nature,
> All lovely and all honourable things.[51]

Coleridge believed that experiencing Nature at this more profound and lasting level was not only morally inspiring, but also,

> seems like society -
> Conversing with the mind, and giving it
> A livelier impulse and a dance of thought.[52]

Man and Nature conversed together in one organic social process. Thus, when Coleridge appealed to Nature, it was not to a pre-societal Rousseauist state, but to a concept that was intrinsically social, involving all of human and natural society, indivisibly. Just as Wordsworth had argued that his love of Nature led to a love of his fellow man,[53] so Coleridge found in his organic view of Nature a force which impelled him to love the rest of society. Nature stirred his heart and inspired 'thoughts that yearn for human kind'.[54] Coleridge's feeling, yet rational appeal to Nature was an appeal to a force which strengthened and confirmed moral and social values, and it will be argued that the political rights it guaranteed were similarly moral and civil.

Coleridge most admired the politicians and statesmen who exercised their feelings and reason in this way, the one enlivening the other. Sheridan was praised because he 'has shown himself so eminently qualified

to feel with reason, and to reason with feeling'.[55] But even more admirable were those few men, such as Washington, who, by curbing their emotions with their reason, had reached a higher moral plane, and were thus fitted to serve the rest of society. Washington was a living exemplar of Coleridge's idea that all political actions and systems had to be based on a feeling, yet rational, approach that was morally and socially directed:

> His feelings, constitutionally profound and vehement (and which if uncounteracted by the majesty of his views, would have been wild and ferocious), gave him a perpetual energy; while the necessity of counteracting and curbing these feelings gradually disciplined his soul to that austere self-command, which informed and moulded the whole man, his actions, his countenance, his every gesture .... [Thus] he ripened his intellectual into moral greatness, intensely energetic yet perseveringly innocent, his hope, the happiness of mankind; and God, and his own conscience, his end![56]

In this way Washington had avoided the excesses of passion or the cold rationalisation of the French revolutionaries and consequently the American republic had been established on more permanent foundations than that of France.

It is evident from this passage however, that the key to Washington's success was his faith in God, rather than any appeal to Nature. It was on this issue that Coleridge's view of Nature differed from that of Wordsworth. Whereas Wordsworth appealed to Nature as a moral force, Coleridge conceived it to be a door which led to the Will of God Himself. There was an element of pantheism in Coleridge's idea of Nature. In Fears in Solitude (1798), he declared that he found 'Religious meanings in the forms of Nature.'[57] Coleridge however was never very comfortable with this pantheistic concept because it confounded his rationally-held belief in one god. Nature fortified his religious belief and convinced him of the existence of God. Gazing on the Vale of Chamouni, he exclaimed 'Who would be, who could be an Atheist in this valley of wonders?'[58] Nature provided the means by which his spirit could rise up and, in a state of exaltation, he could contemplate the Glory of God Himself. Contemplating Mont Blanc, he felt his soul merge with that of the mountain and rise, like the mountain, to Heaven:

> Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my Thought,
> Yea, with my life and life's own secret joy:
> Till the dilatory Soul, enrapt, transfused,

Into the mighty vision passing - there
As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven![59]

For Coleridge, therefore, the highest appeal was not to Nature but to God himself as the being who had created Nature and Man, whose spirit was in each, but who was yet distinct from both. This appeal to the laws of God was an ever more permanent, meaningful basis for politics than an appeal to Nature. It had a relevancy that was open to city dwellers as well as country folk. The radicals had appealed to their own Rousseauist interpretation of Nature, but the appeal to God's laws was not so easily corrupted; it was a less equivocal basis for political principles. The revolutionaries' rejection of God was, for Coleridge, the chief cause of the irresponsibility and excess that had undermined the Republic. In his poem, Recantation (1798), concerning the Revolution, the only man who speaks reason, understands true principles, 'the man that kept his senses'[60], is the Presbyterian sage.

Religion always played a large part in Coleridge's political thinking. Indeed, his main introduction to republicanism came through the radical Dissenting group at Cambridge rather than through Paine's or Godwin's more secular radicalism. After witnessing the Idol-worshipping of Reason during the Revolutionary era, Coleridge's political philosophy became more overtly grounded in Christian belief and moral duty. He felt the rights of citizens were not inalienable, but subject to moral law. For Coleridge the world was ordered by the laws of God and so all of nature, human society and government ultimately had to appeal to these moral laws - an appeal to the God in Nature rather than Nature itself. This moral order with its duties, responsibilities and imperatives could not be violated with impunity. This is shown most clearly in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (1798). When the Mariner shoots the albatross, 'a Christian soul',[61] he disrupts the moral order of the universe and the vital interdependence between man and the natural world. He is punished for this act by being ostracised from society, doomed to live alone, forever repeating the tale which is a Divine lesson that the rest of mankind must heed. Thus, an act of the individual, self-governing, will had violated the natural moral order of society. In a similar position, French radical theorists had elevated the individual will and reason beyond moral duties and Christian responsibilities. This, too, had resulted in the destruction

of society and the neglect of vital religious truths. Coleridge now views 'natural society' in the Burkean sense of the existing moral order of society epitomised by the socially and morally harmonious image of the Church wedding at the end of the poem. Man had to love and care for his Christian brothers in society and had to respect the moral unity that bound all men together. In this 'natural' world view there was no room for individual, inalienable rights. When the Mariner displays this fellow-feeling, the albatross of guilt falls from his neck and he discovers he can pray again.[62]

Coleridge believed that this natural moral order had to form the basis of Britain's own society and government. These lessons had to be taught time after time to the nation and so 'the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country'[63] to tell his cautionary tale. The more democratic system which Coleridge sought had to be rooted in moral law and Christian faith. Rather than Wordsworth's individual communion with Nature, Coleridge stressed the need for a collective dedication of the whole people to God's teaching. For him this was a more practical and powerful concept:

> O Wedding-guest! this soul hath been
> Alone on a wide wide sea
> So lonely 'twas, that God himself
> Scarce seemed there to be.
>
> O sweeter than the Marriage-feast,
> 'Tis sweeter far to me
> To walk together to the Kirk
> With a goodly company.
>
> To walk together to the Kirk
> And all together pray.[64]

In joining together in prayer, in the Church, the natural, moral order of society is repaired. Through Christian teaching and practice the people could discover, in a more practical way, the moral principles which Wordworth believed emanated from Nature. Whereas Wordsworth appealed to the natural state of man in rural communities as the basis for his political philosophy, Coleridge appealed to the natural state of man as part of a Godly community. Although radicals stressed that man had the potential to do whatever he willed, Coleridge believed man had the potential to do whatever God willed; a much more profound, but less abstract capability. And the rights which were thus guaranteed came attendant with moral and social duties.

An appeal to moral law, whether discoverable in Nature or in religion, seemed to be the firm basis which Wordsworth and Coleridge sought for their political philosophy. It avoided the excesses of feeling and reason yet it employed both towards moral, responsible ends. Some of the more moderate radicals however had agreed that man's rights did derive from God, but, once given, were inalienable. In this way an appeal to Divine Law could still sanction the type of radical ideas and practice that Wordsworth and Coleridge had found so destructive and irresponsible. Both poets, therefore, in common with other conservative writers, began to appeal not only to moral law, but to its habitual usage within British society. This appeal to habit and custom can be found as a growing theme in their writings between 1797 and 1802, particularly those of Wordsworth. It will be discussed briefly here because it had a bearing on their definition of political rights at this time. It will, however, be explored at greater length in Section II, which deals with the period after 1802, when the appeal to tradition was of central importance to their political philosophy.

A political system had to be based in moral law, but it also had to be adapted to the habits of the society which it was to serve, otherwise it would prove meaningless to the people and have no permanent appeal. Wordsworth noted, in The Prelude (1805), how the French Revolutionaries had ignored this when setting up their republic. They had appealed to a Rousseauist state of nature and had ignored all existing habits and customs. The result had not been a responsible, lasting republic, but unrestrained anarchy:

> To Nature the
> Power had reverted: habit, custom, law,
> Had left an interregnum's open space
> For her to stir about in, uncontrolled.[65]

Unless a political system made an appeal to the people's habitual feelings and customs, it could have no permanent home in their hearts. It would prove weak and all control would be lost.

In his Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793), Wordsworth had attacked Burke for attempting to yoke 'the living to the dead' and for riveting men to the existing constitution for all eternity.[66] Five years later he still did not wish to retain the existing constitution, but he did see the value of establishing a republican system in harmony

with society's existing customs. These old social customs were no longer seen as restraining shackles but as positive elements which could provide a firm, practical base from which a republican system might grow more securely. Although man was born with certain innate qualities, these were shaped by existing social customs and habits, and could only be fully realised in a social context. Man's natural state, in any practical meaningful sense, was therefore the state of man as shaped by his society and its customs. Man could not remake himself, as the radicals claimed, because his character was partly the result of social habits and experience, as were his rights. Wordsworth explored the role of habit in his Essay on Morals (1798):

> our attention ought principally to be fixed upon that part of our conduct and actions which is the result of our habits. In a [? strict] sense all our actions are the result of our habits - but I mean here to exclude those accidental and indefinite actions, which do not regularly and in common flow from this or that particular habit.[67]

Part of man's 'natural' self were the habits which shaped him. Though reason was important, it, alone, could not be appealed to for it did not form these habits. Nor could abstract reason be the final arbiter of moral worth:

> I have said that these bold and naked reasonings are important over our habits, they cannot form them; from the same cause they are equally powerless in regulating our judgements concerning the value of men and things.[68]

This vital role of habit in forming moral judgements had been overlooked by the radical's emphasis on reason.

Old habits and customs were a particularly important part of country life. Good moral habits informed the daily life, customs and folk tales of the country, but not the alienated life of the town. In The Old Cumberland Beggar (1798-1800), the beggar who wanders the countryside is himself this kind of living, habitual reminder of moral spirit:

> a record which together binds
> Past deeds and offices of charity
> Else unremember'd, and so keeps alive
> The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years.[69]

The country people he meets give the old man charity out of habit rather

than reason, Their finest feelings are evoked when they see him and thus their soul is nourished:

> [It] Doth find itself insensibly dispos'd
> To virtue and true goodness.[70]

Habit then, was a potent moral force which had to be appealed to as part of the natural state of man.

Wordsworth believed that Nature was itself the greatest force for habitual feelings. Nature, being timeless, did not deny habits, but because it was constant, helped man connect with traditional customs more easily. It had the power to evoke past feelings and become a source of ever-present tradition. It contained within it the essence of the past. The 'spots of time', when man communed with Nature, were constant sources of habitual moral feeling that defied time and were recoverable in natural surroundings or through poetry where their meaning was transmitted into art. They 'retained' a 'fructifying virtue'[71] in the mind. these moments were

> ... those first-born affinities that fit
> Our new existence to existing things.[72]

They established the habitual continuum of life. Only when man was linked to his past, and to the customs of his society, could stability be achieved and virtue progress. Since the natural course of life was, therefore, evolutionary and habitual, political change had to be introduced gradually and had to appeal to the customs of society before being accepted. Radical, revolutionary change which disrupted or ignored the habitual fabric of life was unnatural and doomed to failure.[73]

Nature therefore was appealed to as a habitual, moral force: the moral qualities within it were ever-present. More than History, which was the mere record of famous men and great events, particular spots of time in Nature had the power to recall fine habitual, moral feelings and connect ordinary people with the best impulses of the past.[74] Nature, as the habitual, moral state of man in society had, by the turn of the century, become the Burkean basis of Wordsworth's political philosophy.

In a letter to John Thelwall, written in 1796, Coleridge described himself as 'a literary-cormorant'; 'I have read and digested

most of the Historical Writers -; but I do not like History. Metaphysics, and Poetry, and "Facts of Mind" ... are my darling Studies.'[75] In this disclaimer, Coleridge was referring to History (as Wordsworth does above) as the factual chronicle of events rather than the past customs which might contain valuable truths. There is no doubt, however, that Coleridge did not appeal to habit and custom as much as Wordsworth did until after 1802.

Coleridge argued that it was possible to learn much from the experience of the past and that it could be a valuable moral guide. When its habitual lessons were set against the selfish aims of men, however, it proved to be a weak force:

> Much has been said on the effect of past experience; but while ambition and vanity exist, the light of experience, like the lights placed in the stern of the vessel, illumines only the track, that is already passed over.[76]

For experience and custom to be politically useful, they had to be appealed to with dispassion[77], in a rational manner, otherwise selfish emotions overruled the useful moral lessons to be derived from it. Unfortunately, people rarely used it in this disciplined, dispassionate manner.

If the experience and customs of the past were weak guides to present or future action, they could still indicate the value of past practice and reveal what was important to preserve. If a form had stood the test of time through habitual usage, Coleridge believed that it must contain an element of truth that remained alive and meaningful for each new generation. From his initial hostility to established forms and institutions in the early 1790's, Coleridge began to appreciate the value of things which had become habitual - one such was the habitual possession of land in a family:

> Has not the hereditary possession of a landed estate been proved, by experience, to generate dispositions equally favourable to loyalty and established freedom? Has not the same experience proved that the moneyed men are far more malleable materials?[78]

Any system that had proved its worth through habitual usage was worthy of respect, and any new political changes had to be engrafted onto this basis of custom before they could grow securely. Coleridge showed an increasing regard for time-honoured customs and institutions and

for 'the fixed laws in society'.[79] Of these laws, the most habitual and natural were those of God - moral laws which had proved themselves ever-applicable to all ages. As we have seen, the morally disrupted world of the Ancient Mariner is repaired by the time-honoured habit of walking to the Kirk and praying. Thus, custom, particularly in the form of habitual moral laws, became an increasingly important strand in the basis of Coleridge's political philosophy.

Wordsworth's and Coleridge's critique of the radical basis of the constitution had resulted in an appeal to the moral and habitual state of man in society - this was his 'natural' state. By the end of the 1790's both writers viewed man and society in a much more complex and less idealistic way, and their conception of the philosophical basis of the constitution changed accordingly. A new republican system of government had to be rooted in more than a pure, abstract concept of Nature and it had to make a more direct appeal to society as it existed if it was to prove lasting and effective. It had to appeal to man's natural feelings as well as to his reason; it had to appeal to moral values and duties, not just to individual rights which were selfish and socially alienating; it had to appeal to man's habits and time-honoured customs before it could begin to change society. Wordsworth saw all these elements present in an appeal to Nature. This was not an appeal to a primitive state, but to the more Burkean model of the 'natural' state of man in society, one that was feeling, rational, moral, and habitual. Coleridge regarded Nature merely as a window, though an important one, that revealed the Will of God. The Christian moral laws which informed man's reason and feelings, and which were habitual to him, were therefore the ultimate source of Coleridge's appeal.

In response to this more complex appeal, the political rights which were guaranteed to each citizen also had to be revised. If the basis for the constitution was no longer rooted in individual reason, then the rights which were vouchsafed by the constitution had to be based on man in his natural social state, with all the moral duties as well as rights that this entailed.

(c) Rights and Duties

> In the earlier stages of the Revolution, the French legislators endeavoured to erect a Government on the

> foundation of personal Rights. This absurd and impracticable doctrine, the French Jacobins disseminated with that ardour which novelty and fanaticism never fail to impart.[80]

By the end of the 1790's, neither Coleridge nor Wordsworth subscribed to the new radical idea of individual rights. None the less, they did not revert to the traditional eighteenth-century radical position of appealing either to an original contract or to the ancient constitution as the source of political rights. They argued that abstract rights were unrealisable and meaningless until given practical social existence by appealing to the natural state of man in society as a rational, feeling, moral and habitual creature. Rights could not be held absolutely for this merely led to personal despotism; they had to be limited and controlled by the society of which man was an integral part and this necessarily involved reciprocal duties. In The Watchman (1796), Coleridge had, indeed, argued that rights were a species of duty: 'Those duties are called DUTIES which we exercise towards others; those duties are called RIGHTS which we exercise in favour of ourselves.'[81] Each man was duty-bound to consider the welfare of the whole of society in claiming any rights. In moving from a natural rights philosophy to an emphasis on social rights and duties, Coleridge and Wordsworth subtly re-defined the radical rights of their youth, such as liberty and equality, while maintaining that they still were faithful to their original principles. Habitual rights, such as the right to property, were also to enter their political ideology.

In his Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793), Wordsworth had praised liberty as an individual right, unrestrained except by laws which had been approved by the rest of society under a republican constitution with full adult male suffrage.[82] By the end of the decade, however, Wordsworth had witnessed how this natural rights definition of freedom had resulted in the uncontrollable licence and anarchy of Revolutionary France. Thereafter, following Burke, Wordsworth argued that liberty had to be limited and controlled by the moral laws and duties of society in order that it might be possessed by all in a positive way. Liberty could best be achieved within the moral, habitual bounds of rural society. In his sonnet, Nuns fret not ... (1802), Wordsworth described how a regulated social concept of liberty promoted a more positive, moral sense of freedom that could be experienced by all. This entailed a certain forfeiture

of the individual right to follow one's own reason, but, since this inevitably led to anarchy and then despotism, this unrestrained type of liberty was self-denying. Just as the nuns find freedom and moral virtue within the confines of their enclosed convent society, so did Wordsworth find the same within the confines of the sonnet form which became a favoured style of Wordsworth during his more conservative phase after 1800:

> Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
> Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
> Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
> Should find brief solace there, as I have found.[83]

Too much unrestrained liberty could be an oppressive weight which ultimately crushes freedom itself. True liberty was to be discovered in the space created by just rules and laws. Within the fixed, yet creatively liberating, limits of the sonnet form and within the traditional bounds of Lakeland society, Wordsworth discovered a more positive sense of freedom; a freedom that was practical and enduring.

Coleridge saw his whole life, as poet, journalist and philosopher, as a crusade to further freedom by the diffusion of knowledge and truth. The first issue of The Watchman (1796) proclaimed this aim: 'That all may know the truth; and that the truth may make us free'.[84] Once the people had the knowledge to form their own opinions they could be truly free and exercise sovereignty. He counted himself among 'the friends of rational and progressive liberty'.[85] Furthermore, in his Bristol lecture of 1795, The Plot Discovered, he had bitterly opposed Pitt's Two Acts which encroached so much on individual freedom. Despite his repeated attacks on repressive laws, press censor ship and his attempt to set up an unrestrained pantisocratic society, Coleridge realised that, without some formal limits or moral direction, the individual right to freedom could soon degenerate into anarchy. Liberty had to have a moral imperative before it became a positive force for good:

> For what is Freedom, but the unfettered use
> Of all the powers which God for use had given?[86]

This was not a licence for man to do whatever he willed, but to use whatever potentialities God had bestowed on him. It was the opportunity to follow God's will and laws and it entailed responsibility.

This was Coleridge's ideal of freedom which, however, could not be realised under any form of government. It could only 'belong to the individual man, so far as he is pure, and influenced with the love and adoration of God in Nature.'[87] This was the purest expression of liberty - man unrestrained, except by God's laws, which were themselves the highest form of freedom. After the blows delivered to his ideals in the 1790's, however, Coleridge became aware that this concept could never be translated into practice unless it was first adapted to a society where men were incapable of acting in a purely moral way. This ideal of liberty had to interact with social circumstances and become a social right. For Coleridge, abstract principles had no force or meaning until translated into social practice; this might destroy their purity, but it did invest principles with tangible life. Liberty had to be established in harmony with the time-honoured laws and customs of society.

In one of his Morning Post articles, Coleridge praised General Washington's 'Will', which provided for the emancipation of his slaves after his death:

> We feel ourselves at a loss which most to admire in this interesting paragraph, the deep and weighty feeling of the general principle of universal liberty; or the wise veneration of those fixed laws in society, without which that universal liberty must for ever remain impossible, and which, therefore, must be obeyed even in those cases, where they suspend the action of that general principle.[88]

Despite Washington's belief in libertarian principles, he had not transgressed the laws on slavery while he lived, but through the provision of his 'Will' he had still ensured the furtherance of the cause of freedom in the long-term and set an example that would promote future emancipations. In his more pragmatic approach, Coleridge believed that the progress of liberty had to be rooted first in society's laws even if these were antagonistic to its cause. Liberty had to grow from within current social laws and limitations and eventually inter-fuse with these. This progress might be slow and difficult in its evolution, but the freedom gained would be all the more permanent and morally controlled. Here was not the dangerously unrestrained freedom of the French Revolution, but the steady infusion of moral law into civil law. When the fixed laws of society were themselves based on moral principles, then Coleridge's ideal of liberty would be attained.

It can be measured how far Coleridge had travelled away from his original concept of liberty when it is remembered that only five years before the passage above, he had written, in The Plot Discovered (1795), that the principle of liberty could never be suspended or surrendered because it was then difficult to retrieve.[89] By 1800, liberty, far from being indivisible, was a social concept that positively required adjustment, adaptation, even temporary suspension in order to become rooted more securely in society. Liberty had become a social right, restrained by civil law, even if, ideally, it should only be limited by Divine law.

In their radical youth, Wordsworth and Coleridge had stressed the importance of man's fundamental equality. Both writers remained interested in the idea of a more egalitarian society, but, as with liberty, their concept of equal rights was to become more circumscribed.

Most radicals, in the 1790's, acknowledged that there were some unavoidable differences between people such as intelligence, strength and talent, but that there was still a fundamental equality between all men, in a state of nature and that, in consequence, all men were entitled to equal rights. Very few, apart from Thomas Spence, recognised the need for a certain levelling of material conditions in order to reflect this equality in practice. Most were content with the idea that any hereditary titles and large differentials in reward should disappear. Wordsworth's early work reflects this moderate radical position. In his Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793) he stated:

> Equality, without which liberty cannot exist, is to be met with in perfection in that state in which no distinctions are admitted but such as have evidently for their object the general good.[90]

Absolute equality in condition was impossible. Society and government (described in Godwinian terms as 'at best, but a necessary evil'[91]) demanded that certain people be given positions of authority and responsibility and, from these, natural inequalities arose. Wordsworth tolerated these inequalities as inevitable, but he stressed that the unequal rewards had to be earned through merit, and positions of wealth and authority had to be open to all. He attacked 'the unnatural monster of primogeniture'[92] by which people inherited these positions and he attacked artificial inequalities (such as titles and honours) that were

not earned. Although he did not wish to re-distribute land or wealth, he did argue that the poor should be given a proper reward for their labour, which was their property, and that the differentiation between the classes would thus be lessened. There would then be less of 'that inequality among mankind which proceeds from the present forced disproportion of their possessions.'[93]

Over the next twenty years Wordsworth was gradually to renounce nearly all of these views. In The Prelude (1805), however, his idea of equality seems, at first, to have changed but little. Wordsworth proclaimed his faith in 'One brotherhood of all the human race'[94]. No matter how ordinary the person, all men were equal in the sight of God and Nature. The differences in condition between the classes were merely man-made distinctions which concealed this essential one-ness of society. He warned against reading books which drew attention to these surface differences while ignoring the basic equality of mankind:

> [They] ambitiously set forth
> The differences, the outside marks by which
> Society has parted man from man
> Neglectful of the universal heart.[95]

By the time Wordsworth wrote his passage however he had come to the conclusion that, for all practical purposes, the 'natural' state of man was his habitual social state. Although all people were ideally, essentially equal, and although this had never to be forgotten, the man-made, social differences between them were now justified as part of his natural, social state and as the product of custom.

By the end of the 1790's therefore Wordsworth was no longer so interested in seeing the fundamental equality of man translated into social or political terms. The fact that every man had 'his god-like hours'[96] and was spiritually the essential equal of all others, was no longer seen as an imperative reason for changing society; it was almost a consolation to the ordinary people for the surface inequalities they suffered elsewhere in life. It did not entitle them to equal rights, but it was an inner spiritual comfort for not possessing them. Moreover, their closer communion with Nature afforded them moral nourishment beyond the scope of many others. Their inner equality, which all had to recognise, compensated them for their material shortcomings. In The Female Vagrant (1798), Wordsworth describes a

group of beggars the vagrant woman encounters:

> My heart is touched to think that men like these,
> The rude earth's tenants, were my first relief;
> How kindly did they paint their vagrant ease!
> And their long holiday that feared not grief,
> For all belonged to all, and each was chief.[97]

The tone of complacency, even romance, is unmistakable in this depiction of the poor life. Although Wordsworth later reveals that the beggars' life is not entirely the 'long holiday' it first seems, it is still clear that the fundamental equality of their state is compensation enough for their materially inferior condition. Indeed, it even soothes and restores the feelings of the distressed woman. Fundamental equality, once an imperative for reducing the artificial, man-made influences of life, is now a consolation for the lower orders. Their lot is accepted with happy passivity as part of man's social existence.

Coleridge's conception of equality was, initially, much more radical than Wordsworth's, or indeed most radicals', with the exception of Spence. One of the distinctive aspects of Coleridge's pantisocratic scheme was its egalitarianism. Coleridge loved people as his brothers, linked together in the one great family of mankind. Indeed, in an early poem, To a Young Ass (1794), concerning a pantisocratic state, Coleridge even addressed this lowly beast of burden as his 'brother'[98] - a point which possibly inspired Gillray to portray both Coleridge and Southey as asses in his celebrated Anti-Jacobin cartoon of 1798, 'New Morality'.[99] The pantisocratic plan had been an attempt to put egalitarian ideals into practice. This entailed not only each person in the community being given equal rights and the abolition of all titles or distinctions, but also that all work, wealth and land be communally shared. In Religious Musings (1794-96), Coleridge envisaged such a world:

> Return pure faith! return meek Piety!
> The kingdoms of the world are your's: each heart
> Self-governed, the vast family of Love
> Raised from the common earth by common toil
> Enjoy the equal produce.[100]

Coleridge did not recommend the impractical, equal division of land, but rather its communal holding. He argued that 'An abolition of all individual Property is perhaps the only infallible Preventative against accumulation.'[101] In advocating such action, Coleridge went far beyond what most contemporary radicals would countenance, except for Thomas

Spence's famous community Land Plan.[102]

Even when Coleridge had given up the pantisocratic plan, in 1795, he continued to emphasise the importance of equalising people's condition as well as awarding them equal political rights. Indeed, he believed that most radicals made a major mistake in underestimating the need to equalise people's condition before they were given equal rights. The latter were meaningless and weak without the former:

> But you plead, it seems, for equalization, of Rights, not of Condition. O mockery! All that can delight the poor man's senses or strengthen his understanding, you preclude; yet with generous condescension you would bid him exclaim 'Liberty and Equality!' because, forsooth, he should possess the same Right to an Hovel which you claim to a Palace.[103]

All claims of bestowing equal rights or forming an egalitarian society were hollow unless there was, firstly, this equalisation in social circumstance which could give practical meaning to those rights.

Coleridge's views on equality were grounded in Christian teaching as much as radical philosophy:

> He [Christ] demanded from his Disciples a total annihalation of all the merely selfish Passions - and enforced an ardent benevolence and the preservation of perfect Equality among themselves - he tempted by no hopes of Wealth or Honour but expressly forbade them to be higher or lower than the other.[104]

Coleridge argued that being a Christian necessarily involved the acceptance of the ideal of social equality and community of goods. By the late 1790's, however, Coleridge realised that this ideal of equality (like that of liberty) was incapable of being translated directly into practice. Although he continued to see every man as his brother and he described the war, in 1798, as 'fratricide'[105], the failure of the pantisocracy convinced him that a perfectly equal world, of rights and conditions, was only possible in some paradisical Garden of Eden after the Millenium.

Equality, like liberty, was an abstract ideal that could not be realised in its pure form, but had to work through existing social norms. In 1800 he remarked with relief how, 'The doctrines of liberty and equality, in their wild and dangerous extent, were long ago renounced by the Directory.'[106] Even although Coleridge continued to

hope that the great differentials between people would be reduced, he now realised that egalitarian principles had to grow gradually from within society and be conditioned by its laws and customs. In a Morning Post article of 1800 he remarked how the equality which all men possessed could be described as 'the subjection of all to the same laws.'[107] This did not mean that Coleridge was satisfied that this was all that was necessary to constitute an equal society, but he did recognise that this had to be the basic starting point for any future advance in equality. This greater emphasis on civil equality before existing laws led Coleridge, in the years thereafter, to stress equal duties more than equal rights. As we shall see in Section III, he was still interested in improving the conditions of the poor, but he no longer sought any equalisation in material conditions. Instead, he emphasised the equal reciprocal duties of the social classes, duties which the poor could not perform until their material conditions had been ameliorated.

Wordsworth and Coleridge continued to argue that liberty and equality were two essential rights which the constitution had to guarantee, even although they re-defined both as social or civil rights. After 1797, however, there was one further right which gained increasing dominance in their thinking: the right of property. Property rights, rather than abstract natural rights, now seemed the most secure, tangible basis for the constitution because they were habitual and customary to society.

Radicals, such as Paine, attached the right to vote to the personality of man rather than to his property. Not even Paine, however, attacked the concept of private property itself. He believed that there would always be economic inequality in society and an unequal apportioning of property. He did not attack private property on an economic basis, therefore, but argued that the propertied should not be allowed to monopolise political power. Those whose property was their labour or their wage should also be given a share in political decision-making. Thus, even most of the radicals of the 1790's never abandoned Locke's defence of private property. They had no wish to attack the economic foundations of society, but by defining property more widely as including the rights to the fruits of one's labour they advocated a property-based constitution which was also a democratic political

system. Property rights were still one of the four basic rights which even the new French Republic guaranteed.[108] Wordsworth and Coleridge were to depart from this idea of property, after 1797, when they began to argue for political rights rooted in landed possessions.

In his Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793), Wordsworth followed the Paineite view of property. He felt that 'the security of individual property is one of the strongest and most natural motives to induce man to bow their necks to the yoke of civil government.'[109] The 'property' which government protected was not just land, however, but was also the rewards of labour. Working people were entitled to a share in the framing of their own government by virtue of this property right. In many of his poems throughout the 1790's[110] Wordsworth continued to attack the disproportionate differences between the property of rich and poor. He criticised the enclosure of land by parasitical owners and their monopoly of power. Wordsworth had no desire to level property, though he did favour smaller farms in preference to great estates. He also suggested that, though ordinary people had no land of their own, they had a closer affinity to Nature and to the soil than the landowners and that, in a sense, the land was 'theirs'. They had worked it habitually from time immemorial and this spiritual ownership conferred certain rights. Thus, in the poem Goody Blake and Harry Gill (1798), the sticks, which poor old Goody Blake gathers for her fire from the land of the rapacious farmer Gill, are more properly hers by right and, when the farmer tries to arrest her for poaching, she delivers a curse which appropriately makes him as cold in body as in heart.[111]

Despite his belief that the rewards of labour constituted a form of property and that in a more habitual sense the property of the farmers was also the property of the labourers, Wordsworth's view of property rights did change after 1798. Property as a landed possession became more highly prized and became the basis of political rights. In The Last of the Flock (1798), property in the sense of land and stock is an important source of virtue and domestic affection for the enterprising shepherd:

> For daily with my growing store
> I loved my children more and more.[112]

Wordsworth attacked, here, the Godwinian notion that private property was the source of all evil and he showed that, as the shepherd is

gradually forced to sell his property, he becomes a less admirable person. As his flock diminishes in size, so does his moral sense:

> To wicked deeds I was inclined,
> And wicked fancies cross'd my mind.[113]

As his property is eroded, all the shepherd's ennobling values are diminished and his sense of moral duty and domestic responsibility weakens. Property has become a prime source of the domestic, moral affections which Wordsworth so admired.

By the end of the decade, it was the proprietors of small estates who now seemed to Wordsworth the most dependable and responsible elements in the community, by virtue of the property they owned. It was this type of land-holding which conferred political rights and duties. In his letter to Fox in 1800, Wordsworth still declared that 'the most sacred of all property is the property of the poor',[114] but this is said in the Christian sense of the poor being the most blessed. We have seen how Wordsworth regarded their simple moral purity as a consolation for their inferior status. The few possessions which they did have were sacrosanct and they had to be protected by their social superiors, but these possessions no longer guaranteed them a direct participation in government. In the letter Wordsworth makes clear that he now regards the independent landed proprietors as the men most entitled and capable of governing because of their hereditary property and the patriotic moral spirit which this inculcated:

> They are small independent proprietors of land here called statesmen, men of respectable education who daily labour on their own little properties. The domestic affections will always be strong amongst men who live in a country not crowded with population, if these men are placed above poverty. But if they are proprietors of small estates, which have descended to them from their ancestors, the power which these affections will acquire amongst such men is inconceivable by those who only had an opportunity of observing hired labourers, farmers and the manufacturing poor. Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet upon which they are written which makes them objects of memory in a thousand instances when they would otherwise be forgotten. It is a fountain fitted to the nature of social man from which supplies of affection as pure as his heart was intended for, are daily drawn.[115]

Wordsworth felt that this class of small independent proprietors

was disappearing as enclosures progressed, and they were now chiefly to be found in the North of England. In the Lake District, where they still flourished, Wordsworth had discovered the ideal community which could serve as a model for the rest of society. This class of men united, in themselves, all the qualities which, Wordsworth insisted, were essential to the social and political state. They were a source of habitual, moral values and domestic feeling and they were in harmony with their native land and Nature itself. The property which they owned was a tangible focus for all these fine qualities and served to make them permanent. Indeed, in the last sentences of the passage there are strong echoes of Wordsworth's concept of the 'spots of time'. The ever-present, domestic, moral feelings which are discoverable in Nature are now most easily recalled and remembered by those who actually own the land - these small statesmen - rather than by the labourers of the land. The possession of a small landed property was now the highest state of 'social man' to which Wordsworth appealed. Wordsworth had now located 'natural' society in its most ideal form, in the traditional community of small, hereditary property owners found, quintessentially, in the Lake District where Wordsworth had been born and later settled. Property was the permanent centre of all the best rational, moral and habitual thoughts and feelings of social man. Here, finally, was the new basis or home for his political philosophy.

By the turn of the century, therefore, Wordsworth had departed from his original Paineite view of property as labour or wages, as well as land, in order to argue that only the possession of landed property could confer full political rights. Landowners, even great estate owners, were accorded increasing respect in Wordsworth's subsequent writings. In the many editions of The Female Vagrant, which were to follow the original, 1798 version, the misfortunes of the heroine and her father become less attributable to enclosing landlords but are finally ascribed to 'severe mischance and cruel wrong.'[116] It should be noted, in conclusion, that this revised view of property rights and of the landowning class coincides with Wordsworth's own mixing in propertied society. Indeed, in 1802, Wordsworth was given the Applethwaite estate near Skiddaw by Sir George Beaumont and so Wordsworth became a member of that freeholding class he so much admired and, consequently he was now entitled to vote in parliamentary elections.

Coleridge's view of private landed property was also to undergo a transformation in the 1790's. In his pantisocratic phase, Coleridge had favoured the abolition of private property in favour of communal ownership. The land not only belonged to the people in essence, but should also be owned by them in fact. In a sense, therefore, his pantisocracy was still designed to have a property-based constitution. This concept of communal land ownership and rights remained an ideal for some years afterwards, but, since it had proved difficult to translate into reality, Coleridge turned to a more practical concept of the constitution based on individual property rights. Between 1799 and 1800 Coleridge developed this new position on property in response to the recently framed French Constitution of Year VIII. One of the fatal flaws of the Republic, throughout its history, was its lack of a firm basis in property. Without this grounding in property, the French Republic would continue to be a lawless, rudderless state.[117] Coleridge now proposed that political rights should exactly reflect the type of property distribution that was habitual and appropriate to the nation at large. The passage where he explores this idea most concisely is quoted here in full since it sums up so many of the guiding principles behind Coleridge's political thinking after 1799:

> The prejudices of superstition, birth, and hereditary right, have been gradually declining during the last four centuries, and the empire of property as gradually establishing itself in their stead. Whether or no this too will not in a distant age submit to some more powerful principle, is, indeed, a subject fruitful in dreams to poetic philosophers, who amuse themselves with reasonings on unknown quantities; but to all present purposes it is a useless and impertinent speculation. For the present race of men Governments must be founded on property; that Government is good in which property is secure and circulates; that Government the best, which, in the exactest ratio, makes each man's power proportionate to his property. In America, where the great mass of the people possess property, and where, by the exertion of industry, any man may possess it in its most permanent form, this principle may, perhaps, co-exist with universal suffrage but not in old and populous countries, in which land is of high value, and where the produce of individual labour can hardly be large enough to admit of considerable accumulation. Artificial power must here be balanced against physical power; and when the physical strength of a nation is in the poor, the Government must be in the hands of the rich.[118]

Here Coleridge, the 'poet-philosopher', postpones his dream of communal land ownership in favour of a constitution grounded in personal landed property. Each nation had to devise a constitution which reflected its own peculiar property distribution. Although the principle of a propertied basis was common to every constitution, there could be no universal political system applicable to every state because each nation was distinct in its property distribution. Only in America, where there was a wide popular distribution of land, could the ownership of property ever justify universal suffrage. European nations had only limited amounts of land and these could never be shared out among all their subjects and so the suffrage there was necessarily also limited. It is clear from the passage quoted above that Coleridge regarded land alone as the only real and permanent property which could guarantee political rights. The possession of rewards and riches were never to be as important to Coleridge as was property. The accumulation of money was a materialistic activity unless it was used to buy property, for only property-holding entailed moral duties and responsibilities.

In this passage, Coleridge does not merely tolerate inequalities in property-holding, but makes it the very foundation stone of his constitution: political power being proportionate to landed wealth. It should be noted, however, that Coleridge also argued that property had to circulate, i.e. men of talent and merit should be enabled to enter propertied society. The right to hold land should be open to all, through the fruits of one's industry, and not merely be gained by hereditary right. Thus, Coleridge still acknowledged the potential for a wider franchise and one that was not confined to a static class of hereditary landowners. Nevertheless, in this passage, it is the Burkean idea of the constitution reflecting the existing social hierarchy that Coleridge emphasises, rather than any radical concept of the constitution defending inalienable rights and promoting social and economic change. Although Coleridge wished to see property circulate, he had no wish to deprive people of their traditional right to inherit land. This right was the solid bedrock of the constitution, resistant to dangerous extremes. It provided a sure foundation for liberty itself and inspired the loyal, patriotic feelings needed to protect that liberty.[119] Although men of talent should be able to buy their way into

the propertied class, it was the habitual holding of such property by a family through many generations that was the most steady bulwark of the constitution.

Thus, individual property rights came to assume the same constitutional importance for Coleridge as they had for Wordsworth. Property-holding was the habitual source of moral values and duties that had withstood the test of time. It promoted patriotic feelings and thus helped to create a stable society in which liberty could flourish. It was a vital part of natural society. Coleridge concluded that since all theories of government founded on abstract natural rights were unreliable and meaningless, a property-based constitution was the best and most practical 'which our imperfect nature can, or ought to expect'.[120] Accepting the conservative proposition that war was imperfect and could not be relied upon to exercise his reason in a controlled way, political rights had to be founded on a securer basis - this was the nature of man in society, the determining characteristic of which was its unequal distribution of property.

Between 1797 and 1802 Wordsworth and Coleridge were beginning to evolve a new basis for the constitution that was formed in response to the errors which they perceived in French radical theory. Although neither writer openly professed the influence of Burke on their revised thinking, that influence was becoming obvious in their new emphasis on moral law, habit, and property rights and their definition of 'Nature' as the social state of man.[121] Although Wordsworth did not acknowledge this debt to Burke until many years after, when he added 'The Genius of Burke' passage to Book VII of The Prelude[122], his political ideas show distinct traces of Burkean thought. Coleridge had admired Burke for his earlier support of the American War of Independence and he had been initially distressed that Burke had opposed the French Revolution; remarking that this 'Great Son of Genius' had sided with the Government, 'Oppression's hireling crew',[123] even to the extent of accepting a government pension in 1795. Coleridge even called the war against France 'His war'[124] (i.e. Burke's) in recognition of the effect of Burke's attack on the French Republic. By the end of the decade, however, Coleridge had seen for himself how so many of Burke's predictions of anarchy and despotism in

France had come true. He could appreciate how support for the Americans in their war to recover ancient liberties was not inconsistent with opposition to the French revolutionaries who had rejected the past. Burke alone seemed to have anticipated the flaws in radical thought and in the appeal to reason. Like Burke, Coleridge had come to understand that man was an imperfect, habitual, social creature and that any political constitution had to be based on these incontrovertible facts and not on some ideal, abstract image of man. By 1800, Coleridge was describing Burke as a 'great man' and hepraised 'the intimate acquaintance with the general nature of man, and the consequent prescience of Mr. Burke'.[125]

It needs to be remembered, however, that, until 1802, Burke was a mostly unacknowledged debt and that the ideas of both writers were still in a state of transition when it is apparent that, though new influences are detectable they are not yet fully assimilated, far less consciously perceived. In practical, political terms both writers tended to side more with Fox and the Opposition, though the under-current of their political thought was now beginning to flow in more conservative channels. For the moment the Foxite Opposition still seemed the best prospect for initiating the political and social reforms which both writers still sought and which will be investigated in the next chapter.

In 1797 Wordsworth and Coleridge had set out to discover a new, more stable context in which to lodge and frame their republican beliefs; a more permanent home for that kernel of truth to be found in the early years of the Revolution, but which French radicalism had ill-served. Their youthful enthusiasm for the abstract, idealistic approach of the radicals seemed inappropriate for the more complex world they now beheld. If there was to be effective political change, it had to be introduced more gradually, in tune with the existing state of society and the habitual, imperfect nature of man. This entailed an appeal, not only to man's emotional or rational self, but also to the moral framework of society, its habits and customs. The rights which flowed from this appeal were the rights of man as part of society with all the moral duties and the customary or legal limits which this entailed. This was the new context in which any political change had to operate. For Wordsworth this appeal to social man, to his rights and duties, could be made in its most ideal form within rural society, particularly that

of the Lake District. For Coleridge there was no specific physical home where man's finest qualities were most manifest. They were to be found wherever people followed Christian beliefs and moral values, though he did recognise that this was often most evident in rural communities.

When the two poets had begun this revision of radical principles, it had still been with the intention of establishing a republican system of government, only on more secure foundations. Their main aim, up to 1802, was to discover a new political context for this system. Trying to work within the current social and political order, and to change it more gradually, however, necessarily involved accepting some of the tenets and forms of that society and the consequent modification, dilution or postponement of republican aims to fit this context. Until 1802, Wordsworth and Coleridge still favoured political and social changes, but there was an increasing tension between their appeal to the existing condition of man and their old republican aims. This was not to be properly resolved until the period after 1802 when they embraced the existing British constitution. In the meantime both writers continued to press for democratic and social changes which should be gradually, not radically, imposed. It will therefore be argued that, between 1797 and 1802, Wordsworth and Coleridge advocated a more democratic political system, but no longer a fully republican one.

CHAPTER III

REPUBLICANISM MODIFIED

Most conservative theorists considered the British constitution to be the best example of a mixed and balanced constitution. Its three elements, monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, embodied in King, Lords and Commons, were each perfectly balanced. Patronage and influence served to oil rather than corrupt this perfect mechanism. The greatest fear of the conservatives was that this balance would be upset by the Commons, or democratic element, growing in power and destroying the social and political order. The older generation of reformers, such as Richard Price and John Cartwright, challenged this view by asserting that it was the democratic element which was most in danger. They wanted a democratically-elected House of Commons to counteract the preponderant influence of the crown and the aristocracy, though they had no wish to destroy the monarchy or to tamper too much with aristocratic privileges. The new radicals of the 1790's took a more extreme view. They believed that the whole system was in need of thoroughgoing political reform. This entailed the abolition of corruption and influence, of hereditary privileges and, most importantly, the setting up of a republic based on universal adult male suffrage. Few, not even Mary Wollstonecraft, were prepared to advocate votes for women.

In the early 1790's Wordsworth and Coleridge had supported the republicans. However in the period after 1797 how did they now regard the three elements of the constitution and the role of the common people? Which reforms did they still advocate?

(a) Monarchy and Aristocracy

Wordsworth's and Coleridge's increased regard for moral values, customary habits and property rights was centered upon those belonging to the ordinary people or small landowners rather than the higher ranks of the nobility. Their opinion of the monarchy and aristocracy therefore did not undergo any major change in the 1790's, though the undercurrents of a new, more sympathetic attitude became discernible.

The execution of Louis XVI in 1793 did not greatly trouble Wordsworth. He merely hoped that none of Louis' descendants would ever ascend the throne again and he evinced a general dislike for all monarchical systems of government.[1] In his unpublished Letter to the Bishop of LLandaff (1793),[2]

Wordsworth argued that most monarchical systems tended to be despotic and had an unstable basis in the capricious whims of the King. The national interest tended to be forgotten. Even where this was not so, it was still impossible for one man adequately to fulfil all the duties of government. For Wordsworth, the only type of government which secured liberty and ensured that the will of the people (Rousseau's General Will) was recognised, was a republic.

> The office of King is a trial to which human virtue is not equal. Pure and universal representation, by which alone liberty can be secured, cannot, I think, exist together with monarchy. It seems madness to expect a manifestation of the general will, at the same time that we allow to a particular will that weight, which it must obtain in all governments, that can, with any propriety, be called monarchical. They must war with each other, till one of them is extinguished.[3]

In the ten years that followed this Letter, Wordsworth's views on monarchy were to change little. He continued to see it as a flawed, usually corrupt, method of government. Its hereditary nature meant that the calibre of the king was often far below that of his ministers and that, if it had been submitted to a democratic election, few of Britain's kings would have been chosen as the man best-fitted for the job.[4] Britain's contemporary royalty, particularly the Prince of Wales, seemed to Wordsworth even less responsible and more neglectful of their national duties than their predecessors.[5] By the turn of the century, however, Wordsworth's venom became increasingly directed against despotic or absolute rulers in general.

> Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
> Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
> The destiny of Man, and live in hope.[6]

The best society was centered upon the people and their welfare rather than upon one individual ruler. Constitutions which tied their rulers to that end were the best, but absolute monarchies, devoid of this principle, were still vehemently attacked by Wordsworth. When Napoleon was crowned Emperor in 1804 and France returned to a monarchy as absolute as that of the Ancien Régime, Wordsworth characterised it as 'the dog / Returning to his vomit.'[7]

Coleridge believed that true majesty was more often to be found in ordinary people than in kings. In his 1794 poem on The Man of Ross, who

helped the sick and forgotten, the man's moral spirit is more impressive than any king's:

> Richer than Miser o'er his countless hoards,
> Nobler than Kings, or king-polluted Lords,
> Here dwelt the Man of Ross![8]

Monarchs themselves rarely earned the right to be called 'Majesty' for they were usually corrupt and despotic. Like Wordsworth and contemporary cartoonists, Coleridge singled out the Prince of Wales for special opprobrium in this regard. He cast ridicule on the Prince and his amorous adventures, displaying Prince George and his wife, Caroline, as silly, pompous and rather pathetic creatures, who, nevertheless, were destined to assume great powers over people more moral and worthy than themselves.[9]

Coleridge had little sympathy for the demise of monarchies and, indeed, in Religious Musings (1794-96), he looked forward to the time when all oppressive rulers would be cast down in apocalyptic fashion, 'as the untimely fruit/Shook from the fig-tree by a sudden storm.'[10] In 1798, when satirically reviewing the execution of Louis XVI, Coleridge depicted the ox of the Revolution running over Louis and he evinces only mock sympathy for the king:

> Nay, gentle Reader, do not sneer!
> I cannot chuse but drop a tear,
> A tear for good old Lewis![11]

The execution which he depicted is ludicrous rather than tragic, yet the tenor of the lines suggests that, by 1798, Coleridge believed that, though Louis deserved to lose his crown, he did not merit the loss of his head. He was a victim of the uncontrolled madness of the Revolution.

Certainly from this time on, Coleridge was more sympathetic to the concept of Kingship. He was careful however to draw a distinction between 'kings' who had little personal power, but were constitutionally limited, and 'monarchies' which were despotic forms of government:

> thank Heaven, it is still our possession, as well
> as birth-right, that we have a KING, and no Monarch![12]

Coleridge tolerated the existence of kings, who were circumscribed by the laws of the land and who took an active interest in the welfare of their people. He also admired the 'Patriot King' who, while not constitutionally bound, was still at one with his people. Here, he

echoed the ideas of Bolingbroke earlier in the century. One man who, in Coleridge's opinion,had the makings of a 'Patriot King' was Frederick William II of Prussia. He took an interest in the oppressed peasantry and tried to meliorate their condition. He made attempts to subject all classes to taxation and was interested in social change, even in the face of noble opposition. He had 'a partiality to a system of Reformation',[13] which showed him to be fair, just and mindful of the popular will. None the less, Coleridge was also aware that even Patriot Kings had the capacity for turning into despots because there were no formal controls on their actions.[14] Only a constitutional monarch could be trusted and even then Coleridge only tolerated it as a secondary element in a system that had to be centered on the will of the people.

Aristocracy was the second element in the constitution that Wordsworth and Coleridge attacked. Throughout the 1790's, they sided with the radicals in objecting to the monopoly of power exercised by the great nobility. They criticised honours, titles and privileges which were hereditary and had not been earned. Although they attacked the power of the great aristocracy, they did see the need for the middle and upper classes to provide a lead in society and in government by virtue of their long experience and their links with the land. Few radicals, at this time, wished to hand over government entirely to the or dinary people and most, like their friend John Thelwall, saw the need for the uneducated lower orders to be guided by the superior rationality of the higher classes.

Although Wordsworth saw increasing worth in the smaller landowning class, he remained much more trenchant in his attack on the aristocracy than did Coleridge. Much of Wordsworth's antipathy springs from personal experience. He was born in Cockermouth, a village virtually owned by the Lowther family of Westmorland. His father John was Sir James Lowther's 'law-agent', they lived in one of Lowther's houses, and part of John Wordsworth's duties included the task of making sure that local free-holders voted for Lowther candidates at election times.[15] William therefore was raised in a household where the meaning of aristocratic influence was palpable. When his father died in 1783, there was a huge debt of £4,000 owing to him from his employer, but the Lowthers did not repay it. The orphaned family was split up and farmed out to relatives

on whom they were dependent for a livelihood and an education. This early experience of the aristocracy had a profound effect on Wordsworth. It epitomised all their faults - their duplicity, lack of responsibility, greed and disregard for moral values. It also cast into relief the contrasting worthiness of the ordinary people and yeomen farmers who subsequently reared the family. In his poem, Imitation of Juvenal: Satire VIII (1795), the Lowther (i.e. Lonsdale) family stands as one of the prime examples of those aristocrats who are immoral, corrupt and undeserving of their titles and positions:

> What has this blessed earth to do with shame?
> If Excellence was ever Eden's name?
> Must honour still to Lonsdale's tail be bound?
> Then execration is an empty sound.[16]

In the same poem, he also attacked how the aristocracy controlled the legal system to their own advantage; no doubt remembering how the Lowthers had used the courts to deny the Wordsworth family its legitimate claim to the money owed to them.[17]

In his Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff, the aristocracy comes under sustained attack. Wordsworth castigates titles and distinctions which are supposed to signify worth, but which more often disguise its complete absence. He singles out for criticism those hereditary titles and privileges, conferred in the distant past, which still entitle the family to hold eminent positions and legislate for millions, no matter what the calibre of these later generations.[18] Wordsworth argued that government offices had to be filled by men who had earned their place. True ennoblement was derived from virtue and merit, and the esteem of colleagues. But it was not just the undeserved titles and power of the aristocracy to which Wordsworth objected, but also their lifestyle and the demoralising effect this had on the rest of society:

> [Nobility] has a necessary tendency to dishonour labour, a prejudice that extends far beyond its own circle, that it binds down whole ranks of men to idleness while it gives the enjoyment of a reward which exceeds the hopes of the most active exertions of human industry.[19]

The profligacy of the idle rich undermined the work ethic and demoralised the real labourers in society who would never gain the rewards which the aristocracy dissipated after doing nothing. This situation upset all sense of value and morality in society. Since they had a pre-eminent social position, their gambling and immoral behaviour also

corrupted public manners. This parasitic, amoral element in the constitution was one of Wordsworth's most compelling reasons for advocating a republic.[20]

Although Wordsworth wrote very little more on the aristocracy until after 1802, there is little reason to suppose his views had radically changed. His increasing reverence for habitual customs and property rights attached itself to those of the small yeoman farmers and freeholders, rather than to the great landowning aristocracy. The paying off of the Lowther debt in 1803, however, and his increasing contact with the aristocracy, was, after 1802, to contribute to a major reconsideration of the political role of the landed nobility.

Coleridge also condemned aristocracy, titles and privilege, but not as resolutely, as Wordsworth. Coleridge attacked materialism and greed in every form, whether it was the pursuit of money, titles or hedonistic pleasure. He framed the immorality of the aristocracy within the bounds of an acquisitive, corrupt age. In one of his earliest poems he proclaimed,

> How false, how vain are Man's pursuits below!
> Wealth, Honour, Pleasure - what can ye bestow?
> Yet see, how high and low, and young and old
> Pursue the all-delusive power of Gold.[21]

Venality and corruption were not just to be found in aristocratic circles, nor did a title necessarily connote unworthiness or an abuse of power. He praised Lord Stanhope, an aristocrat who also supported the democratic cause and was a 'Friend of the Human Race'.[22] Just as Coleridge could see good and bad in both rural and urban societies so, unlike Wordsworth, he viewed the powers and titles of the nobles more circumspectly. Titles were an irrelevance beside the more important, deeper crime of oppressing the people. It was this that Coleridge attacked.[23]

Although Coleridge did not damn the aristocracy so completely as Wordsworth, there is no doubt that he did consider them generally the most corrupt class in society; and as all the more reprehensible because they held such high positions of responsibility. He especially despised the superficial, narcissistic social world of the aristocracy. This artificial decadent society knew little of God, natural thoughts or deep feelings. In a poem, written in 1799, he hoped that men would,

violently sweep
These vile and painted locusts of the deep,
Leaving un - - undebas'd
A - world made worthy of its God.[24]

This section of the aristocracy did nothing to justify their existence, power or wealth, yet they were regarded as the leaders of the nation. Like Wordsworth, Coleridge was more impressed by people who displayed natural virtue. This was reward enough; there was no need for titles and honours if one lived a moral life. Moral worth was an end in itself and no pretext for further ennoblement. The hallmark of a great man was his deeds not his title:

> What wouldst thou have a good great man obtain?
> Place? titles? salary? a gilded chain?
> Or throne of corses which his sword had slain?
> Greatness and goodness are not means, but ends!
> Hath he not always treasures, always friends,
> The great good man? three treasures, LOVE and LIGHT,
> And CALM THOUGHTS, regular as infant's breath:
> And three firm friends, more sure than day and night,
> HIMSELF, his MAKER and the ANGEL DEATH![25]

Spiritual satisfaction was the greatest reward for virtue and endeavour, besides which titles were at best an irrelevancy.

Coleridge did believe, by the end of the 1790's, that despite all these shortcomings the nobility did have an important role to play in the political system, even if he felt that their power and direct influence was 'constitutionally less than that of the popular and representative branch'.[26] It has already been noted how, after 1797, Coleridge showed an increased regard for property rights - not just those of Wordsworth's small statesmen, but also those of the greater hereditary landowners. Through their long possession of an estate they had a strong physical stake in their nation's property and security and thus also in the constitution:

> Our Nobles in England, from the largeness of their landed estates, have an important stake in the immediate prosperity of their country; and, from the antiquity of their families, may be reasonably presumed likely to associate with it a more deeply-rooted and partial affection.[27]

Just as Coleridge believed that property had to circulate to be a justifiable basis for the constitution, so he believed that these upper classes had to be more open to the rest of society in order to justify their position within that constitution. The men of talent whom he hoped would

be able to rise up in society and buy property, could thus enter the 'gentleman' class: the lower slopes of the English nobility. Through this door, which was open to all, the political position of the nobles could be justified:

> ... by occasion of their younger children they were the original founders of an order of Gentlemen among us, into which order a liberal education and polished manners have at length the privilege of incorporating any man, whatever his parental rank might have been; and thus, by the introduction of a greater social equality among us, they more than compensate to us for their political superiority.[28]

It should be noted that Coleridge has been careful to circumscribe the power of the nobility even although, in a property-based constitution, the landed classes had to have an important role to play. The landed aristocracy had to be open to talented men of all ranks before their political role could be justified, and that role was itself less vital than the popular element within the constitution. Although this system best suited Britain, where there could never be a universal propertied suffrage and where there was a long tradition of hereditary land-owning, it has been noted how Coleridge still regarded the American republican system as an ideal. By 1800, however, Coleridge had aligned himself with the older, more moderate reformers who did not wish to abolish the aristocratic element in the constitution, but he still wanted the democratic element to be the strongest. Wordsworth, on the other hand, with his continued attacks on monarchy and aristocracy, still seemed more sympathetic to republican thinking on these matters up to 1802. It reamins to be seen how Wordsworth and Coleridge now regarded the common people and the third element in the constitution: democracy.

(b) The Common People, Democracy and Reform

Through the vicissitudes of the 1790's Wordsworth's and Coleridge's faith in the common people remained firm. They explained their violent, anarchic behaviour in France by claiming that they had been betrayed by such leaders as Robespierre and that radical change had been imposed on them too suddenly to be assimilated. Both writers still admired the simple values of the people and when they appealed to the reason, habits and moral feeling of man, it was common man they thought of primarily. In the Lyrical Ballads of 1798 and 1800, they also made a conscious

attempt to identify with a wider class of readership. Their revised view of the land-owning class however, and their perception that the uneducated lower orders were easily swayed, led Wordsworth, but Coleridge even more, to doubt whether the common people were capable of participating in the governmental process.

In general, Wordsworth defined the true 'people' as those who worked manually and lived in the countryside: those who were closest to Nature and to the moral values it inspired. In The Prelude (1805), he stated:

> My first human love,
> As hath been mentioned, did incline to those
> Whose occupations and concerns were most
> Illustrated by Nature, and adorned,
> And shepherds were the men who pleased me first.[29]

Here was Wordsworth's ideal - the solitary man who was also part of rural society and at one with all the virtues of nature. He found in the society of these ordinary country people a sense of morality, duty and responsibility not to be found amongst the lower orders of the city, who lived among 'the deformities of crowded life'.[30] The true, admirable common people were only to be found in rural society. In them, Wordsworth discovered,

> a sure safeguard and defence
> Against the weight of meanness, selfish cares,
> Coarse manners, vulgar passions, that beat in
> On all sides from the ordinary world
> In which we traffic. Starting from this point,
> I had my face towards the truth.[31]

Even when Wordsworth did show admiration for more industrial workers among the common people, as he did with the miners in Peter Bell (1798)[32], they still plied their trade within a rural society. Although they were divorced from the direct experience of Nature, they still lived in rural communities rather than the growing urban centres and they partook of the moral values of that community.

Wordsworth's love for these ordinary country folk was rooted in his own upbringing and experience. He had absolute faith in their natural virtue and, in the Lyrical Ballads (1798 and 1800) he tried to identify with their thoughts and feelings to an extent that is rare among the political theorists of the age. In these poems his intention was to use 'a selection of language really used by men',[33] rather than more classical

poetic diction. He hoped that in these plainer terms he could convey how he had discovered in the simple lives of country folk all the most durable, natural and moral values which ought to underpin society.

> Low and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended; and are more durable; and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.[34]

The moral and habitual values which Wordsworth most prized were therefore to be disovered in their purest and plainest form in the common people of the country. Being present there, in such a simple but powerful way, these values stood as more easily understood lessons for the rest of society. The speech of the ordinary people, which was plain and unaffected, could communicate these moral truths more readily than the artificial styles of the upper classes. Their simple mode of speaking arose 'out of repeated experience and regular feelings',[35] and was therefore at one with the stable customs and habits of society. The common people thus seemed to be at the very heart of Wordsworth's conception of natural society. In trying to use their speech in his poems he was not only identifying himself with their lives, but was using a medium that was also his political message: the need to appeal to the moral, habitual values inherent in country life and Nature.

Wordsworth's poetry, up to the completion of The Prelude in 1805, is peopled with the lower orders - labourers, beggars, orphans and widows. His sympathy and interest is greater than that of most of his contemporaries. He countered the ruling-class image of the lower orders as ignorant, immoral and brutal by portraying them as the moral, common-sensical and feeling heart of the nation. For Wordsworth, they were a sustaining source of worth, knowledge and inspiration[36], and their lives had the calmness, virtue and order which he wished all society to have:

> there I found
> Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace
> And steadiness, and healing and repose

To every angry passion. There I heard,
From mouths of lowly men and of obscure,
A tale of honour - sounds in unison
With loftiest promises of good and fair.[37]

In the society of ordinary country people were to be discovered simple, universal truths from which the rest of society could benefit.

Although Wordsworth saw ordinary people as a source of moral strength and an inspiring example to all, this did not necessarily imply that they could be accorded political power. Without education they were not always equipped to act on their moral feelings in a responsible, orderly way. Wordsworth's observation of the anarchy of the French people in the 1790's had taught him this and so, by the end of that period, he was turning to another class in society as the most responsible. As has been argued, in the 1801 letter to Fox, Wordsworth addressed 'the small independent proprietors of land'[38] as the most dependable and morally upright section of the community. They were part of rural society, in touch with Nature and all its simple, moral values, yet they had further vital advantages which the common people lacked. They were 'men of respectable education .... placed above poverty',[39] and with a physical stake in their country's welfare and security through their farms. Thus, they had the requisite education, material independence, and sense of responsibility that the common people lacked, but which were vital if the moral values of rural society were to be translated into durable political practice and into law. These 'statesmen' encapsulated all of 'our best qualities',[40] but they also gave them permanency and bottom. Although the feelings of the ordinary people were natural and strong, they did not have the same capacity for controlling these emotions and using them responsibly in the national interest. Moreover, their material dependence meant that they had to be more concerned with the exigencies of subsistence. The farms of the statesmen not only gave them a vested interest in the national welfare, but also gave them the economic independence which might enable them to make political decisions in the interests of the entire nation and not be so easily swayed. Thus, it was the small landowning class which Wordsworth believed was best suited to power and to realising, in practice, the domestic values and affections of the ordinary people.

When Coleridge spoke admiringly of the common people, he included those who lived in the town as well as the countryside. It has been

argued that he regarded cities as part of natural society and accordingly he respected those who worked there. Although the ordinary people of the city were cut off from the benevolences of Nature, this did not mean that they were evil or should be ignored. In Reflections On Having Left A Place Of Retirement (1795), he recommended people should take an active interest in the distressed people of the towns.[41] Coleridge, however, did draw a distinction between townspeople and the 'mob'. The mob was not a purely urban phenomenon, but rather any large multitude of people which displayed strong, even admirable, feelings, and which showed little controlling reason. They were not to be trusted: 'I am one of these who greatly reverence the feelings of a multitude, though I have not the same respect for the opinions that excite them'.[42] This was what Coleridge had found most dangerous in the French revolutionaries; they had shown great zeal but their motives had often been misguided and they were easily led astray.

Although the Lyrical Ballads was planned as a collaborative venture with Wordsworth, Coleridge soon became unconvinced by his fellow poet's attempt in the 1800 'Preface' to identify with the people by writing in their own language.[43] Coleridge did not believe that such an exercise was possible, useful or desirable. A conscious simplification of one's own diction in mimicry of another was itself a species of the artificiality which Wordsworth had hoped to eradicate. In Biographia Literaria (1817), he stated, 'I conclude therefore, that the attempt is impracticable; and that, were it not impracticable, it would still be useless'.[44] Indeed, he felt that the most successful of Wordsworth's poetry was that which used the more elevated style natural to the author. Certainly, Wordsworth himself had not intended to write any part of his projected philosophical opus, The Recluse, in the style of the common people, nor, in its major completed parts (e.g. The Prelude (1805) and The Excursion (1814)), was he to do so.

Although Coleridge came to the conclusion that this degree of identification with common people was misguided and of little practical value, he still regarded them as a central class in society that could never be ignored. The poorer classes had great inner, spiritual worth because they were nearest to God. In A Christmas Carol (1799), Coleridge hailed the Virgin Mary as the mother of God's own Son, but also as a member of the poorer orders:

> Thou Mother of the Prince of Peace,
> Poor, simple, and of low estate![45]

Jesus, himself, had been born to a lowly carpenter's wife and his disciples were all to be common men, yet they were nearer to God and His Word, than all the rich men. Again it was Christian belief which influenced Coleridge's political philosophy and demonstrated the central importance of the common people.

Coleridge therefore argued that all good government had to take cognition of ordinary people since they were blessed by God and nearest to Christian teaching and moral values. Great statesmen, such as George Washington, recognised the centrality of the common people to society and the President always displayed 'a humann ess of feeling, a complete union of himself with the mass of his fellow-citizens'.[46] He understood that government always had to serve the people and identify with their problems and desires. Ordinary folk were also a fountain of moral spirit from which all governments could draw strength and resolve:

> Washington thought, felt, and acted in and for his age and Country; the same temperance presided over his opinions as his actions. He sympathised with the moral and religious feelings of the great mass of his fellow-citizens.[47]

The need for governments to recognise the people's wishes as well as their deep Christian spirit, however, did not imply that the lower orders were entitled to direct participation in the parliamentary process. By the end of the 1790's Coleridge, like Wordsworth, had realised the folly of the ruling class relinquishing the reins of government before the people had been adequately prepared. First, they had to be educated and thus learn the responsibilities entailed in government, if the excesses of France were to be avoided. Although the people were a source of valuable moral feelings, these could not be realised in practice without the controls of reason, custom and law. As we have argued, Coleridge regarded the propertied class as the social group best able to govern in this more informed, responsible manner.

Since their view of the common people had been modified, what kind of democracy did Wordsworth and Coleridge favour by the turn of the century?

The democratic ideas of the two poets must be set in the political context of the day. Although neither now advocated a pure republic,

their views still fell on the reformist side of the debate on parliamentary reform. Conservative writers were naturally against extending the suffrage and supported the constitution as it stood. The people were believed to be too ignorant, irresponsible and violent to use power well. Burke argued that events in France showed that democracy was merely a despotism of the people far worse than that of the old monarchy because it also destroyed the existing state and social order. Many British radicals also feared giving the people too much control. Price and Cartwright, for example, favoured a democratically elected House of Commons, but one balanced by monarchical and artistocratic elements. Mackintosh feared the possibility of mob rule if a republic was formed and argued that the minds of the people had to be shaped by the middle classes before power could be apportioned. Only the more extreme radicals such as Paine had favoured a democratic republic with full adult male suffrage.

Wordsworth's initial idea of a republic is outlined in his Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff and it displays Paineite thinking. He argued that a republican government was the best guarantee of liberty. It contained 'less of an oppressive principle'.[48] Wordsworth believed that every individual should have the right to vote,[49] although it is unlikely that he meant to include women. He felt that a democratic system was the most pragmatic way of ensuring an identity of interest between governors and governed. If men were to acquiesce in the laws of the nation then they had to be given a say in the framing of those laws.[50] In order to ensure that the legislative branch was always in tune with the wishes of the people, there also had to be frequent elections. Rotation in office was essential too, so that men did not become corrupted by power.[51] The men, who filled these offices, should be chosen on merit, not wealth, and this was another reason why Wordsworth favoured abolishing property qualifications for parliamentary candidates.[52] These measures, he believed, would promote accountability in office, produce just laws and guard against extremes. Writing in 1793, he answered Burke's prediction that the French democratic system would lead to anarchy and then despotism by arguing that the people would act fairly and could be counted upon to choose M.P.s wisely if they were only 'left to the quiet exercise of their own judgement'.[53] Even although they were, at present, in a violent mood this was only a natural, though regrettable, reaction in France after its centuries of oppression and it would soon

die away as the republic grew stronger and the sway of reason prevailed.[54] Wordsworth also argued that the people's lack of education was no barrier to their participation in government, as Burke had contended. At present, the lower orders need only be called upon to pick their legislators:

> Setting aside the idea of a peasant or mechanic being a legislator, what vast education is requisite to enable him to judge amongst his neighbours which is most qualified by his industry and integrity to be intrusted with the care of the interests of himself and of his fellow citizens?[55]

Indeed, Wordsworth felt that republicanism was itself a force for extending education. Since it was a more open system, it would be in the government's interest to keep the people informed and to tend to their needs, if it hoped to be re-elected. Finally Wordsworth still recognised the need for an executive branch of government to check or scrutinise the acts of the legislature. He envisaged this as a minor role, however, compared with that of the legislative which was the ultimate expression of the General Will.

Since Wordsworth was to write little more on republican political reforms until after 1802, it is difficult to assess how his views may have changed by the turn of the century. What has already been learnt of his political philosophy at that time, however, as well as some passages from The Prelude (1805), provide some evidence. His continued attacks on the aristocracy, monarchy and hereditary titles show that Wordsworth still favoured a more meritocratic system of government and that he believed that the heart of that government was the legislative branch. Patronage and influence were still abhorred and needed to be eradicated. We have also seen that his belief in reason gaining sway had proved misplaced. Terror and violence had increased, not diminished, and the republic had not become the force for public education and moral purity that he had once envisaged.[56] Considering this and his great respect for small independent landowners, did Wordsworth still favour a republic with universal adult male suffrage?

In The Prelude, Wordsworth looked back over the 'shameful' course of the Revolution. He proclaimed his continued belief in a democratic government and he argued that it had been perverted by the base leaders of the French. Democracy was a 'Creed which ten shameful years have not annulled'.[57] If a better leader had emerged, the republic would have

grown more strongly and effectively. Such a leader could,

> Have cleared a passage for just government,
> And left a solid birthright to the state.[58]

Wordsworth did not believe that a republican system of government was intrinsically flawed, but that it had been ill-served by its leaders. The violence and despotism of the 1790's had not grown from the concept of 'popular government and equality',[59] but were attributable to forces extrinsic to republicanism itself. He also recognised that the republican experiment had not only foundered because of bad leadership, but also because the people themselves had proved ignorant and inexperienced. His 1793 view of their lack of education had been too sanguine and, in The Prelude, he regretted their 'ignorance/And immaturity'.[60] Although a republican system still remained an ideal, it could only be successfully implemented when the long history of the people's ignorance and inexperience had been counteracted. This would take time and could only be gradually achieved. In the meantime, as we have seen in his letter to Fox, Wordsworth trusted the small landowners as the most responsible class; the one most fitted to govern the nation in the interests of all.

Although Coleridge also considered a republic to be the ideal form of government, he had always stressed that political change of any kind had to be preceded by the necessary educational, moral or social reforms. It has been noted how Coleridge regarded an improvement in physical condition to be a prerequisite for granting full political rights. From the early 1790's he had argued that people had to be educated and morally enlightened before any form of government could be effective:

> Without previous illumination a change in the forms of Government will be of no avail. These are but the shadows, the virtue and rationality of the People at large are the substance, of Freedom: and where Corruption and Ignorance are prevalent, the best forms of Government are but the 'Shadows of a Shade'. We actually transfer the Sovereignty to the People, when we make them susceptible of it.[61]

Pantisocracy had been so desirable because it had promised this type of 'illumination' without the need for any formal government. In the absence of a pantisocracy, however, the best type of government was a democracy and later, in this same passage from The Watchman (1796), he stated that the aim of the newspaper was to cooperate 'with the

Patriotic Societies, for obtaining a Right of Suffrage general and frequent'.[62] Although the suffrage had to be widened, it could not include the common people until they had been educated, intellectually and morally, for this responsible role. Thus, even in his more radical youth, Coleridge had not envisaged the immediate granting of universal adult male suffrage.

By the end of the decade, Coleridge had entrusted political power to the property-owning class. This section of the community was the best educated, experienced and responsible class and they had a physical stake in the welfare and security of the nation. Although Coleridge regarded landed property as the bedrock of the constitution, however, he was in favour of extending the franchise to those who owned houses, which he regarded as a different, but legitimate, form of property. In 1798 he attacked those who had voted down Grey's proposals for parliamentary reform which had proposed giving householders the right to vote:

> Is not this to declare that the householders of Great Britain are incapable of chusing their own agents with common prudence or common honesty; and that their agents so chosen will not promote the true peace and welfare of their constituents, unless they are bribed to their duty by the secret influence of the Crown? Such are the tenets which they must needs entertain who oppose themselves so implacably to the cause of national reform and amelioration; and will the Nation place confidence in the men, who place no confidence in the Nation?[63]

Coleridge therefore favoured an extension of the franchise to include householders as well as the forty-shilling freeholders: an appropriate reform for a writer who considered both the towns and cities to be integral parts of natural society.

Although he believed that the franchise had to be based on property, whether in the form of land or houses, Coleridge still stressed that society had to be more open in order to allow ordinary people of talent to gain property. He also believed that a property-based constitution had to be subject to the will of the people. It had to appeal to their interests and identify with their wishes. He praised, in government, 'that best and most salutary species of ephorism, the opinion of the public'.[64] ['ephorism' = controlling power or supervision] All the best forms of government thus had to be grounded not only in property, but also had to embody the popular spirit and, if there was a monarchy, the king had to be subject to law and to be concerned for the welfare of his

people.[65] Even if the people did not have a direct say in the framing of the laws, their needs and wishes still had to be considered.

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge attacked the bribery, corruption and influence that was part of contemporary political life. Throughout the 1790's he opposed the dishonest practices which were part of most elections because these fed on, and encouraged, the immorality of voters. This was especially repugnant to him for he believed that the sustenance of moral values was essential to all good government and society. Instead of fostering these values, the current system destroyed them. He found this most evident in the corrupt elections of the pot-walloper boroughs:

> Votes would be collected for the wealthy, indeed, but only as far as they employed their wealth to the production of perjury and debauchery in the minds of those, whose morals are of more especial importance to the well-being of society.[66]

But it was not just the corruption of elections that concerned Coleridge, but also the successful money-grabbing, pension-seeking candidates once they reached Parliament. They had no sense of responsibility or real interest in the nation's welfare or in the constitution, but were only concerned with self-advancement: 'They love the constitution only in proportion as it gives them power, and the Monarch, as he assists in filling their purses'.[67]

Thus, it is evident that, though both Wordsworth and Coleridge had retreated from the more radical republican views of their youth by the end of the 1790 s, they were still ideologically closer to the moderate reforming wing of the Parliamentary Opposition than were other, more conservative writers. Both still regarded a republican system as an ideal, though Coleridge maintained it was not a practical goal for Britain and could only be attained in America where all could own property. Wordsworth remained more republican in his hopes for Britain and continued to attack monarch and aristocracy. Coleridge was more sympathetic to monarchical systems, but argued that all forms of government still had to be obedient to 'the collective Majesty'.[68] Like Wordsworth, and the other more moderate reformers, Coleridge believed in the need for a powerful legislature, but one that was still subject to constitutional checks and balances provided by other separate bodies.[69] In Wordsworth's view, this legislature had to be comprised of small independent farmers who were the backbone of the nation. Until

the lower orders became more educated they were the most dependable class who could be entrusted with a political role. Coleridge wished to extend the franchise to householders as well as to more substantial property owners, but he did not envisage the lower orders having a direct political role, unless by their talents they could rise in society and thereafter gain property. Finally, both writers were agreed that the existing political system was corrupt and in need of reform so that it would serve the people and not merely the governors themselves.

Although Wordsworth and Coleridge had modified their republican schemes by the beginning of the new century they still held firm the belief that the first duty of government was the welfare of the people. In particular, government had to be concerned with the alleviation of poverty. This was not only an essential duty but also a vital precondition for the smooth functioning of government itself, because effective rule could only rest on the goodwill of the people. In their continued emphasis on social reform and concern for poverty, they were still in harmony with the moderate radical circles of the day. They believed these to be the chief objective of all government, but ones ignored by Pitt's Administration. Only the democratic system which they favoured could fulfil these aims completely.

The radicals of the 1790's may have accepted that economic inequalities were inevitable, but, unlike most conservative writers, they did not believe poverty itself to be inevitable. It could, at least, be alleviated. Very few radicals however, sought social or economic reforms without the prior change in the parliamentary system which dominated their thinking. Part II of Paine's Rights of Man did recommend some far-reaching social reforms, but he believed that these could be most readily realised under a republican form of government. More conventionally, Paine also opposed expensive government and the oppressive taxes levied on the poor.[70] Daniel Isaac Eaton believed that only a democratic government would lower taxes, reform the Poor Law and help the lower classes to improve their lives. Thelwall similarly believed that everyone in the kingdom was entitled to a subsistence living, but that there had to be a wider franchise before this could be realised. Thomas Spence was one of the few to emphasise the primary need for a re-distribution of property before political change could be fully effected. In his pantisocratic days, Coleridge had also advocated social reforms as

essential prerequisites for political rights. Although he abandoned his communal land policies, Coleridge still believed that the alleviation of distress and the welfare of the poor were the chief duties of government. Both he and Wordsworth, in advocating an extended democracy, saw social welfare as the central political duty of government, as a general humanitarian concern, and as a vital tool for raising up the people to a more responsible, moral position in society and government.

All of Wordsworth's major poetry is informed with a deep personal knowledge of, and sympathy for, the condition of the poor. Although the Lake District itself was a relatively prosperous farming community, Wordsworth's immediate neighbours in Grasmere, the Fisher and Ashburner families, had fallen on hard times.[71] Moreover, there were always itinerant beggars and gypsies passing through the area, whom Wordsworth would help with a few coins, as well as listening to their tales of hardship.[72] In his poetry he constantly drew attention to the plight of the poor and thereby placed it as a central concern for society and government. The poorest people in the community became the focus for his finest poetry - outcasts, war widows, orphans, beggars and pedlars recur often as feeling individuals in their own right, whom society had traditionally ignored. Using these people as the stuff of the highest creative art, Wordsworth rendered dignity and importance to the poor and sought to elicit society's interest and sympathy. Although Wordsworth did not offer many panaceas for their condition, his vivid depiction of that condition brought these marginalised figures to the public's attention in a feeling response that few radical writers could match. It is in this descriptive sense and in his promotion of the poor as the central concern of society and government that Wordsworth's politics retain much of its radical impulse into the early years of the new century.

Wordsworth argued that poverty was seldom the fault of the individual as most conservative writers claimed. In The Last of the Flock (1798), it has been seen how the shepherd still falls into poverty and cannot support his large family even although he is an industrious, even enterprising man. He has to sell all his assets and be left with nothing, before he can even qualify for parish relief. In An Evening Walk (1793), and then again in The Female Vagrant (1798), the impoverished, anguished heroines are war widows. Their husbands had died fighting for their country, but the response of an uncaring society is neglect for their

widows. Once again their distress is not the result of personal improvidence. Wordsworth often used this image of the female outcast or pauper as a potent symbol of poverty. In a society where women were largely dependent on men for material support, their descent into poverty was particularly unjust because it was almost always inflicted upon them irrespective of their own merits. The case of the female pauper stood as proof that poverty was most often caused by external circumstance. Poverty was the result of exploitation or neglect by government and employers:

> Send this man to the mine, this to the battle,
> Famish an aged beggar at your gates,
> And let him die by inches - but for worlds
> Lift not your hand against him.[73]

It was this use and abuse of the people in society and in war that impoverished them.

Wordsworth depicted poverty as a struggle for survival involving constant physical and mental anguish. In this oppressive state all natural domestic, moral affections were impossible. When people acted in an immoral or irresponsible fashion this was not so much a cause of poverty, as its result. As Godwin had argued in Political Justice, it was external circumstance which conditioned so much of man's life and character.[74] In a poetic fragment of 1797, Wordsworth described how a baker's cart passed by a mother and her family of five. They could not afford the bread and so it was as if 'there had been/No bread in all the land',[75] so completely were they ignored. In a country of plenty the poor were uncared for and deprived of the sustenance they had a right to expect. The experience hardens the woman's character and makes her rebellious:

> She said: 'that waggon does not care for us' -
> The words were simple, but her look and voice
> Made up their meaning, and bespoke a mind
> Which being long neglected, and denied
> The common food of hope, was now become
> Sick and extravagant, - by strong access
> Of momentary pangs driven to that state
> In which all past experience melts away,
> And the rebellious heart to its own will
> Fashions the laws of nature.[76]

A government and society which treated the poor in this way and neglected their rightful claims to an adequate standard of living bred a class of people who were divorced from the salutary experiences of that society. They were forced to live 'unnatural' lives, marginalised

from all social habits, traditions and moral values. They created their own laws rather than obey the natural laws of society. Outside the usual social norms, they were a potentially rebellious group. Thus, the social and moral cohesion of society was dependent on every section of the population having an adequate standard of living: 'The domestic affections will always be strong amongst men who live in a country not crowded with population, if these men are placed above poverty'.[77] The welfare of the poor was not just a humanitarian concern for all governments, but a necessary precondition for maintaining the moral values and social unity of the nation.

Wordsworth believed that the Poor Law was totally inadequate as a response to this challenge. Workhouses and soup kitchens had weakened rather than strengthened 'the bonds of domestic feeling among the poor'.[78] At best, these were palliatives, not real solutions, to the problem:

> The evil would be the less to be regretted, if these institutions were regarded only as palliatives to a disease; but the vanity and pride of their promoters are so subtly interwoven with them, that they are deemed great discoveries and blessings to humanity.[79]

The Poor Law only aided those who had sunk so low that they had no other hope left; the real solution was to prevent these people falling into poverty in the first place by giving them a just wage for the work they did. The meagre wage (or 'property') of the poor was sacred[80] and it was the duty of the government to ensure that they were paid a sufficient wage to live comfortably. The shepherd, in The Last of the Flock, should not have had to wait until he was destitute before receiving help, but should have been awarded adequate recompense while in the process of building up his flock. The poor should not be compelled to remain in a dependent position all their lives, relying on Poor Laws and the help of others. It was vital for the dignity and self-respect of every man that he should himself be able to act charitably towards others. This fundamental right of each human being was denied to the poor because they themselves were always consigned to a dependent role in society:

> man is dear to man: the poorest poor
> Long for some moments in a weary life
> When they can know and feel that they have been
> Themselves the fathers and the dealers out
> Of some small blessings, have been kind to such
> As needed kindness, for this single cause,
> That we have all of us one human heart.[81]

All men, therefore, were entitled to an adequate reward for their labours so that they could live comfortably, act morally and be able to bestow acts of kindness on others and thus be humanised. In The Prelude, Wordsworth wistfully recalled how he had believed, in the early 1790's, that, through the Revolution and the setting up of the Republic this dream would come to fruition. Addressing his Girondin friend, Beaupuy:

> I with him believed
> Devoutly that a spirit was abroad
> Which could not be withstood, that poverty,
> At least like this, would in a little time
> Be found no more, that we should see the earth
> Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
> The industrious, and the lowly child of toil.

And this was all dependent on establishing a republic:

> the people having a strong hand
> In making their own laws, whence better days
> To all mankind.[82]

Although by the time he wrote this, in 1805, Wordsworth had seen these hopes confounded, the goal still remained. Even if he had, by then, postponed the inception of a republic and placed his trust in a government run by small land-owners and farmers, Wordsworth still believed that the alleviation of poverty was their prime political duty. Their strong regard for domestic moral values and the national welfare ensured that this type of government would be the most reliable, and best-equipped, for fighting the poverty which threatened to erode those moral affections.[83] Once this had been accomplished, the lower orders themselves could begin to enter the political process.

The welfare of the poor was also a constant concern for Coleridge, though he was more interested in causes and solutions than in depicting the effects of poverty like Wordsworth. Coleridge also argued that the poor themselves were not to blame for their condition. Instead, he attacked the government's oppressive taxes and those employers who used the poor to make war-time profits. The poor were kept in a lowly condition so that others might grow rich on their misfortune:

> The people overloaded and oppressed with taxes and other misfortunes are called upon to subscribe literally in defence of their country, and the example set is that of miserable sums from men wallowing in the spoils of the public; men whom war pampers, and whose prosperity is commensurate with the general distress.[84]

Thus, Coleridge argued that the prosperity of the upper classes was built on the poverty of the people. They were exploited without pity whether at home or as common-fodder in the war - the servants of an uncaring nation. Indeed, in his 1795 Bristol Lectures, Coleridge had argued that war service was regarded by the government as one solution to unemployment for it excused them from expending effort to find a real cure.[85]

Throughout the 1790's Coleridge also attacked those monopolists and speculators who had thrived in war-time and who had the backing of the government. They too exploited the poor for their own profit. They had hoarded grain in order to keep prices high and to make a large profit rather than sell it at a lower price and so help feed the poor:

> We should have supposed, that if bread were cheap, the only result would be, that the people, who are now but half-fed, would then have their belly-full, and that those who have now enough would employ the spare money in adding to their meals the rarities of beef and mutton.[86]

What the monopolists saw as an opportunity for making extra gain should have been seen as an opportunity to provide the poor with a better diet. Like Wordsworth, Coleridge believed that in a land of plenty, the poor were being denied their rightful share of the national produce. It should be noted however that Coleridge did waver in his opinion on this controversial debate about the grain shortages facing the poor.[87] He recognised that there were some genuine shortages of food caused by bad weather and exacerbated by a rise in population.[88] It was not all attributable to the actions of the monopolists, though he believed that, at the very least, they made the situation worse by their selfish actions.[89]

Coleridge therefore isolated the government, employers and monopolists as the chief perpetrators of poverty. The government had also contributed, indirectly, to their poverty, by denying the people an education. Indeed, in 1796, Coleridge had argued that this lack of education was a deliberate ploy to keep the poor in a subservient and submissive position.[90] It meant that they had no possibility of improving their status or condition in society. If the poor were denied all the comforts of life and the means to rise above their lot, they would only ever be ignorant and brutish, lacking all those circumstances of life that humanise mankind.[91] People could not be expected to live for ever in this hand-to-mouth fashion, seizing only the gratifications of the moment. They needed an

adequate standard of living in order to be happy and so that the moral and domestic affections could thrive. Otherwise, family bonds were severed and they became rivals for their own meals.[92] In these crucial circumstances even the arrival of a new baby in the family could tip a household into dire poverty and be a cause for distress rather than joy.[93] Thus, Coleridge, like Wordsworth, saw poverty as a morally debilitating and socially divisive condition. He also could see the danger that poverty, by loosening moral values, might lead the poor into crime. In punishing these criminals the government was, in fact, sentencing people for crimes ultimately caused by that same government's lack of interest in the condition of the poor.[94]

The efforts which government did make to alleviate poverty were inadequate or inappropriate. Like Wordsworth, Coleridge regarded the Poor Law as a palliative, not a remedy. It murdered the poor by degrees, giving them just enough to survive, but not enough to live in dignity or comfort. The Poor Law was not an honourable way of dealing with poverty but a veneer which hid the real problem:

> And what mean these Committees for the labouring poor? These numerous soup-establishments? These charities so kindly and industriously set on foot through the whole kingdom? All these are highly honourable to the rich of this country! But are they equally honourable to the nation at large? - Is that a genuine prosperity, in which healthy labourers are commonly styled 'the labouring poor' and industrious manufacturers obliged to be fed, like Roman clients, or Neapolitan Lazzaroni?[95]

This article of 1800, which itself echoes previous lectures and articles by Coleridge in 1795 and 1796,[96] reveals the consistency of his opposition to contemporary measures for helping the poor. The Poor Law merely salved the conscience of the rich, but it did little to alleviate poverty. Coleridge drew attention to the fact that labourers and industrious workers could still, despite their efforts, be sunk in poverty. The phrase 'labouring poor', used to describe this class, should properly be a contradiction in terms, but it was all too appropriate. The poor were no longer a small part of society, they were the labouring class and, despite their industry, they still suffered the indignity of being dependent on the charity of the upper classes. This was no true national solution to the problem of poverty.

Coleridge was equally critical of Pitt's attempt at reform in his

Poor Bill of 1797, which Coleridge termed, 'that acknowledged abortion - that unanswerable evidence of his ignorance'.[97] He regarded it as a mere patchwork of ideas, incoherent and unoriginal, thrown together without any real grasp of the real problems created by poverty.[98] Coleridge believed that if there was peace, then the economy would prosper unhampered and the resulting material benefits could be distributed more fairly so that everyone could enjoy a more comfortable living. The government had a positive role to play in this, but, under Pitt, this had been neglected and the social welfare of the nation, which was the prime duty of government, had been ignored.[99]

Although Coleridge no longer considered the pantisocratic ideal of communal property, communal produce and equality of condition to be a practical way of alleviating proverty and distress, he did believe that the government had to ensure a fairer reward for the people's labour and had to care more for the poor. It was their Christian duty to see that everyone received a fairer share of the fruits of the earth. In a Morning Post article of 1798, Coleridge enqui red, in rhetorical style,

> 3. Whether extreme poverty does not necessarily produce laziness?
> 4. Whether, therefore, to provide plentifully for the swinish multitude be not feeding the root, the juices from which will spring upwards into the branches, and cause the top to flourish?
> 5. When the root yieldeth insufficient nourishment, whether wise men would not wish to top the tree, in order to make the lower branches thrive?
> 6. Whether hungry cattle do not leap over bounds?
> 7. Whether there might not have been suggested modes of employing two hundred millions of money to more beneficial purposes than to the murder of three millions of our fellow-creatures?[100]

In this passage Coleridge counters conservative views of the 'swinish multitude' (Burke's phrase, used satirically). Coleridge argues that the poor are not lazy, but should be given better rewards and incentives for their work. Indeed, if this were done then the whole of society (the tree, from root to topmost branches) would flourish all the more strongly. Coleridge also argued that if there was not sufficient wealth to reward the poor adequately from the existing system, then there would have to be some redistribution in the economy, taking from the rich (the top of the tree) to give to the lower orders. The war had been an unnecessary drain on resources which could have been used more profitably

to better the conditions of the poor rather than be used for the slaughter of their fellow man. In question 6, he suggests that, if something is not done to reward the people adequately, society runs the risk of disruption. Even out of self-interest, therefore, the government would be well advised to attend to the welfare of the poor. Indeed, when this article first appeared in The Watchman, Coleridge recommended that, in Parliament, at least one week in every month should be devoted to discussing 'schemes for the national benefit'.[101]

But Coleridge always believed in the efficacy of individual actions as well as the need for government aid. It was man's Christian duty to be amongst the poor, helping and educating them. Each little individual act of kindness was worthwhile and was in the true Christian spirit. He urged that it was man's moral duty to be concerned for the poor and distressed, and to help them.[102] Although a truly national solution could never be achieved until the people received an adequate wage, it was still possible for each person in the community to act on an individual basis to further the welfare of all.

Although the philosophical basis of their political ideas had shifted by the end of the century and they viewed radical methods with a more critical eye, it is evident that Wordsworth and Coleridge still centred their politics upon the common people and their welfare. Their idea of a constitution had been modified to meet the conditions of existing society; the rights which this constitution guaranteed, were social rights or duties; their political philosophy was based on morality, habit and feeling as much as on reason; but they still had as their goal an extended democracy, purified of corruption, whose most important function was to serve the wishes, and further the welfare, of the people, particularly its poorest sections.

The events of 1802, in many ways even more traumatic than those of 1798, were to expose the tensions between the new conservative and old radical elements in this philosophy. The attempt to evolve a more democratic constitution from the existing state of society had necessarily involved the acceptance of some of that society's values. The events of 1802 were to confirm these traditional values as the most cherished and dependable of all. The Burkean elements, already evident in some of their

thinking, were to become manifest. In the years after 1802 it was the existing national constitution which seemed the most perfect and the most worthy of defence. Wordsworth's and Coleridge's quest for a new home for their political ideas, begun in 1797, was now to become a journey back to their own home - the British nation.

SECTION II

THE DEFENCE OF THE NATION AND THE CONSTITUTION, 1802 - 1818

CHAPTER IV

BRITAIN'S MORAL WAR

Just as the events of 1798 had been instrumental in distancing Wordsworth and Coleridge from radicalism and in causing them to re-define the basis of their political beliefs, so the events of 1802/03 were to help complete this ideological process. The conservative elements which had already emerged in their philosophy were now to be confirmed as the most reliable and valuable. As the radical movement went into retreat for most of the war, Wordsworth and Coleridge found it less necessary to answer its case and, instead, developed their political philosophy in response to the views of Burke, who now seemed the most percipient voice of the previous decade.

Both writers treated the precarious Peace of Amiens as a time of experiment. It would finally prove whether French democratic ideals only needed favourable, peaceful conditions to flourish again or if they were intrinsically weak and flawed. When democracy failed to revive under Napoleon and the government became more authoritarian than ever, it was not just Napoleon who was perceived as a disappointment; the republican system, which had originally set France on this tyrannical course, now seemed intrinsically flawed and limited. The war, which resumed in 1803, took on a new moral aspect. Despotic France, and all radical philosophies emanating from that land, was cast in the role of absolute Evil, while Britain was transformed into the avenging Angel of God. The course of the Napoleonic War was to confirm, for Wordsworth and Coleridge, that the most dependable, stable political system was that which was already enjoyed by Britain herself. It had withstood despotism for more than a century; it had ensured liberty and it had proved itself adaptable to changes in British society. The two writers thus relinquished their attempt to engraft a democratic system onto existing society and, instead, with nationalistic fervour and conviction, they embraced that society and its traditional political system. It seemed the most perfect system that Britain, or any other nation, could expect to enjoy.

This section will demonstrate how Wordsworth and Coleridge arrived

at this conclusion and how they defended what they had once attacked - the national constitution.

Public events during the Napoleonic War helped to shape the political philosophy of Wordsworth and Coleridge, but the force of that impact can only be fully understood when weighed against the personal experiences of the two poets. These years were marked by private loss and tragedy and, finally, by the disintegration of their friendship.[1]

The period started promisingly enough for Wordsworth when he married Mary Hutchinson on 4 October 1802 (the same day on which Coleridge had chosen to marry Sara Fricker in 1795). But then, only three years later, Wordsworth's beloved brother, John, died at sea and this was followed, in 1812, by the death of two of his children, Catherine and Thomas. The effect of these traumatic events was compounded by personal anxiety. Although the Lyrical Ballads had gone through several successful editions, Wordsworth's wartime writing, such as the Poems of 1807 and the Convention of Cintra pamphlet, sold very indifferently. The first version of his greatest work, The Prelude, was completed in 1805, but it was never published in his own lifetime. Wordsworth (and Coleridge) suffered a barrage of invective from the influential Whiggish periodical, the Edinburgh Review, which attacked them on aesthetic grounds, but also for their political apostacy. These setbacks deeply upset Wordsworth and they were made worse by his own fears that his creative powers were in decline. His intense feeling of communion with Nature seemed to have faded. He believed that he could no longer sense things so deeply; his 'visionary gleam' had dimmed. In his Ode: Intimations of Immortality (1802-04), he charted his declining powers:

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight,
> To me did seem
> Apparelled in celestial light,
> The glory and the freshness of a dream.
> It is not now as it hath been of yore; -
> Turn wheresoe'er I may,
> By night or day,
> The things which I have seen I now can see no more.[2]

Consequently, Wordsworth believed he had gained a less illusioned view of life, but he had lost his old feeling for Nature and, with it, much

of his earlier optimism and idealism. His political ideas were now also to be characterised by a greater sense of pragmatism, and the earlier notion of an improved world was lost.

Amid these disappointments in his life, Wordsworth turned more and more to the solace of religion. The certainties and traditions of the Church of England held a new appeal for Wordsworth, as did all the other established institutions of English life. Wordsworth also found comfort and friendship among a new circle of upper and middle rank acquaintances who were mostly government supporters. In 1803 the new head of the Lowther family paid off his £8,000 debt to the Wordsworth family and, in the years that followed, Wordsworth became a close friend of the Lowthers. He accepted a position as Distributor of Stamps for the area, and, in 1818, he vigorously campaigned for the Lowther candidates in the Westmorland election. This gravitation towards more congenial, conservatively-minded friends, is also reflected in Wordsworth's topographical progress from the poor, cramped conditions at Dove Cottage to the greater comforts of Allan Bank and Grasmere Rectory, and then, finally, to the relative grandeur of his house at Rydal Mount, which was leased to him by Lady Fleming. The Ambleside gentry, rather than the Grasmere poor, now formed his social milieu. All these developments conspired to draw Wordsworth to a conservative view of politics, which he held with increasing conviction, as he grew older, and became less tolerant of different opinions. In the midst of personal tragedy and anxiety, the reliable, time-honoured institutions and verities of the British constitution seemed like a rock of stability and truth.

These years were, however, much worse for his friend Coleridge. By 1802, Coleridge's ill-advised marriage had become untenable and, though he loved his children, he and his wife were unhappy and they increasingly lived apart.[3] Coleridge was ill much of the time and had become addicted to opium. Like Wordsworth, he could no longer feel the inspiring force of Nature. His creative and visionary powers had waned and in Dejection: An Ode (1802), he charts his decline in similar terms to Wordsworth:

> Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
> Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:
> Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
> In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
> I see them all so excellently fair,
> I see, not feel, how beautiful they are![4]

Coleridge could only see natural forms now, he could not feel their inspirational force. In the years after 1802, he too was to draw his inspiration more and more from the powers of organised religion. Increasingly this alone guided and elevated his soul.[5] Similarly he argued that the constitution could only be securely grounded in the precepts of religious faith.

The disintegration of Coleridge's poetic powers, after 1802, was to be more absolute than Wordsworth's. Dejection was one of his last great poems and, thereafter, he wrote only occasional verse. Realising that Wordsworth was the greater poet, he left the field to him, in order to concentrate on prose works, particularly journalism and works on political philosophy. In The Friend (1809) he stated,

> that for some years I have felt and deeply felt, that the Poet's high Functions were not my proper assignment ... I am content and gratified, that Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, have not been born in vain for me: and I feel it as a Blessing, that even among my Contemporaries I know one at least [i.e. Wordsworth], who has been deemed worthy of the gift.[6]

Although Coleridge appears to view this change in a spirit of equanimity, he still perceived it as another failing in himself. He was depressed that he had had to abandon the highest art of all, and the indifferent reception to his political philosophical journal, The Friend, offered little succour. In this time of uncertainty and the loss of his old role, Coleridge also sought comfort in the traditional values and stability of Britain's constitutional system.

Coleridge's visits abroad also convinced him of the superiority of the British system, as well as the wisdom of waging war against France. While Wordsworth became even more settled in the Lakes, Coleridge left for the Continent in 1804 and spent fifteen months in Malta, in the service of the government, under the governor of the island, Sir Alexander Ball. There, and in his subsequent wanderings around Europe, Coleridge witnessed, at first hand, the effects of the war and of British policy. He gained a knowledge of the European political scene analogous to that of Wordsworth in his European excursions in 1790 and 1792. In the fortified harbour at Valetta, the French threat was palpable and Coleridge gained an understanding of the realities of war. This helped him identify strongly with the policy of the British government and it strengthened his nationalistic spirit. In the face of a tangible enemy,

Coleridge began to cherish his homeland, its government, society and constitution. Malta proved to be the safe anchorage for Coleridge's burgeoning conservatism.

The restless wanderings and insecurity of Coleridge's life during the war did, however, lead him to adopt a less parochial stance than Wordsworth and often enabled him to see beyond the limits of Britain's constitutional structure.

Perhaps the greatest trauma which affected both poets was the disintegration of their friendship. Wordsworth and Coleridge had begun the new century closer than ever before, living near to each other in the Lakes, publishing the Lyrical Ballads and discussing together much of their political and artistic output. Coleridge was one of the few to read The Prelude (1805) in Wordsworth's own lifetime and, when he went to Malta, he carried a hand-written volume of his friend's poems, including the five book version of The Prelude, dedicated to himself.[7] In the years ahead, Coleridge continued to encourage Wordsworth to compose a great epic, a philosophical poem - the uncompleted Recluse. Coleridge also planned a 'magnum opus' which would encapsulate his views on society, government and morality.[8] Thus, the same animus inspired both writers. During the war years they believed that they had reached the point where they could express, in final form, their complete political and philosophical system. Politics formed only one aspect of this attempt to see life as one interrelated whole: it was to become part of a wider moral vision of the world.

Although Wordsworth and Coleridge continued to have similar aims and principles, their friendship was not sustained. Wordsworth's Convention of Cintra pamphlet and Coleridge's Letters on the Spaniards, both published in 1809, were the last works on which they closely collaborated. Strains had already developed between the two writers after Coleridge's return from Malta in 1806. Wordsworth was shocked and saddened by his friend's physical deterioration through opium addiction,[9] and Coleridge felt increasingly uncomfortable in the atmosphere of moral rectitude which seemed to pervade the Wordsworth household. To an extent, Wordsworth's view of Coleridge's fall from grace echoes his feelings of disappointment and disillusion in the course of the French Republic. It, too, had ended in failure, decay and immorality. Wordsworth's rather patronising reaction to his friend's afflictions mirrors

his change to a more generally paternalistic outlook, and towards an elitist, morally absolute stance in politics. The final break came in 1810 when these underlying tensions were released as Wordsworth confided a few disparaging remarks about Coleridge to a mutual friend, Basil Montague, who subsequently repeated them to Coleridge himself. Although the friendship was to be patched up two years later, they were never to be so close again and, it will be seen that, although their political philosophies still proceeded along similar paths, there was not the same collaboration or agreement as there had been before. By 1818 Wordsworth identified much more strongly with the Tory party than Coleridge, who remained, till the end of his life, the more sceptical outsider who was readier to embrace social and political change. Wordsworth's increasingly conventional life in the Lakes led him to accept a settled party position and a narrower, more parochial stance. Coleridge's alienated life abroad, and in London, predisposed him to adopt a more independent position: a philosophy which was more cosmopolitan and dynamic, yet still essentially conservative.

These personal experiences of Wordsworth and Coleridge coloured their perception of national events. At the very moment, when the two poets were in their most depressed state, the ambitious conduct of Napoleon caused them to renounce their remaining hopes in France and in republicanism itself. It appeared that Burke's predictions, about the inevitability of military despotism occurring in France, had been well founded. Republicanism, which had spawned such a tyrant, had proved to be a false philosophy and they turned instead to the Burkean defence of the existing constitution. Their political hopes and ideals turned homewards and, like the majority of their countrymen, they supported the government and its war policy. During these years the radical movement was to decline not just because of government repression or internal weakness, but because most people, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, believed that the validity of the conservative case had been confirmed by the increasingly despotic course of the republican experiment in France. It was difficult for radicals to sustain affection for republicanism when it seemed to have produced imperial absolutism and military aggression.[10]

Wordsworth had always been more sceptical of Napoleon's pacific intentions than Coleridge. Therefore, when peace was finally signed in

1802, Wordsworth entertained few hopes for its lasting success. Far from being genuinely committed to the Peace of Amiens, he believed Napoleon would use it as a breathing space to regroup his forces and prepare for a further extension of his oppressive empire. With France under his hypnotic sway, Napoleon was a force for evil:

> When, looking on the present face of things,
> I see one man, of men the meanest too!
> Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo,
> With mighty Nations for his underlings.[11]

Although Wordsworth still believed Britain was far from perfect, she was the only nation capable of opposing and defeating the evil power of France.[12] Events on the Continent, during the peace, reinforced Wordsworth's view of Napoleon. The independence of Switzerland was again subverted, designs were made on Egypt, Syria, the Greek Islands and Malta, and a French army was maintained in the Netherlands, the origin of the conflict in 1792. In the face of these provocations, Wordsworth argued that a resumption of war was the only way of securing a more permanent, stable peace.

The continuation of Napoleon's ambitious schemes and the failure of the Peace did not surprise Wordsworth, but merely removed any lingering doubts he had that the war had been justly prosecuted by Britain since the French invasion of Switzerland in 1798:

> This just and necessary war, as we have been accustomed to hear it styled from the beginning of the contest in the year 1793, had, some time before the Treaty of Amiens, viz. after the subjugation of Switzerland, and not till then, begun to be regarded by the body of the people, as indeed both just and necessary; and this justice and necessity were by none more clearly perceived, or more feelingly bewailed, than by those who had most eagerly opposed the war in its commencement, and who continued most bitterly to regret that this nation had ever borne a part of it.[13]

The change in Wordsworth's political views had already begun before 1802, but the resumption of France's imperial designs, in that year, did completely dash any residual hopes Wordsworth might still have harboured. It hardened his anti-French sentiments and helped him identify, rationally and emotionally, with Britain's cause in the war. Britain was no longer seen as the baser of the two evils, but as a positive force against evil. The events of the Peace removed all Wordsworth's doubts and he committed himself wholeheartedly to Britain's cause after 1803. His more complex

view of the conflict had hardened into a stark, morally polarised vision, which was to have a profound effect on his political ideas.

Coleridge's reaction to the failure of the Peace of Amiens was much more extreme than Wordsworth's, although the final effect was to be similar. Unlike Wordsworth, he had continued, up until 1802, to support the Foxite case for peace in the hope that, under Napoleon, France would return to the libertarian ideals of the early revolution. Coleridge viewed the Peace of Amiens as an 'experiment',[14] which would finally prove if Napoleon was the harbinger of democracy and social justice, or merely an ambitious tyrant. The actions of Napoleon during the peace proved the latter case, and Coleridge's reaction was one of stunned horror and profound disappointment. He had ceased to write for the Morning Post over the Summer of 1802, but, when he resumed in September, there was a noticeable change in the tone of his articles. Although he could still be critical of the British government, he mainly attacked France and Napoleon in a trenchant manner, and campaigned for an immediate resumption of war against a power which seemed implacably evil, ambitious and belligerent. Britain had gained nothing from the Peace, whereas Napoleon had gained time to increase his forces, stealthily extend his power and prepare for the resumption of war.[15] Like Wordsworth, Coleridge came to the conclusion that Napoleon's actions had rendered war both necessary and just:

> What can render a war just, presupposing it to be expedient, if insult, alarm and danger do not? and how is it conceivable, that it can be expedient for a rich, united and powerful Island-Empire to remain in peace with an insolent neighbour, who has proved to it, that to insult, alarm and endanger it is both its temper, and its system? This appears to me the true state of the quarrel between Great Britain and the First Consul.[16]

Coleridge believed that, even although Napoleon's aggressions in 1802/03 were not directed against Britain herself, they constituted part of a much wider attack on liberty and morality which did involve Britain and all free nations. Indeed, he argued that the entire French political system was now inimical to virtue and thus 'any one of these aggressions involves the meaning of the whole'.[17] Coleridge fully endorsed the resumption of war in 1803 as a necessary action to protect, not only Britain's independence, but also free values throughout Europe. France now seemed irredeemably despotic and war, therefore, appeared the only

way of achieving lasting peace. As he often noted, the route towards an ideal could sometimes only be achieved by using methods which were contrary in spirit to the original ideal, but which were nevertheless pragmatic.[18]

As always, then, the actions of Napoleon had proved to be instrumental in changing Coleridge's political thinking. His last hopes in France were destroyed and he now doubted the efficacy of a democratic system which had produced another tyrant. After 1802 he began to identify more strongly with the government's policy and attacked his old friends, the Foxite Whigs, for continuing to oppose war. He started writing for the government news paper, the Courier, in 1804. He was grateful that peace-time events had taught the people about France's true despotic intentions and had now made most of the nation unanimous in their support of the government and its rightful resumption of war.[19] Coleridge was always to be proud of the fact that he had been one of the first to recognise the peace as false, and to warn the public of French ambitions. He later claimed that his articles in 1802 and 1803 had been instrumental in awakening the nation and preparing it for a renewal of the war.[20] Indeed, by 1810, he not only claimed that he had been the government's most percipient supporter, but also that he had never entertained any hopes that Napoleon would be the saviour of French liberty - the position which he had indeed held before 1802.[21]

The result of the 'experimental' peace therefore was a final confirmation of Wordsworth's growing doubts about France and a reversal of Coleridge's previous hopes. Both writers now became supporters of the government and its war policy. Their patriotic spirit, which had been restrained by radical sympathies, was now given full rein. They began to see new worth in the stable, time-honoured British constitution and praised the nation with a greater moral certainty.

After 1803, Wordsworth and Coleridge supported the British war effort in a manner that was similar to their support for the French in 1792/93. They believed it was a defensive war to protect liberty and moral values. Both writers did recognise, however, that the mere resumption of war did not automatically make Britain a moral force. Although Britain opposed the evil of France, this did not necessarily mean that she was a conscious force for good. As the war progressed, however, Wordsworth and Coleridge believed that the conflict did indeed improve the morality of Britain

and convert her into a positive, virtuous force in the world. This was to be a most important idea for it convinced them that if the policy of the British government was moral, so must be the traditional constitutional principles which inspired it and which it protected.

Wordsworth believed that although Britain had shown little sense of morality in signing the Peace of Amiens with a tyrannical power, her moral spirit began to revive once war was recommenced in 1803. It was not, however, until Britain became involved in the Peninsular Campaign, that Wordsworth believed she had ceased merely to oppose evil and had become a conscious, positive force for good. In the course of helping the Portuguese and the Spaniards to recover their liberty, Britain herself regained her old moral spirit and virtuous principles. In his pamphlet, The Convention of Cintra (1809), Wordsworth explained how the war had taken on a new moral direction for Britain, when she became involved in the Peninsular Campaign:

> from that moment 'this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality'. This sudden elevation was on no account more welcome - was by nothing more endeared, than by the returning sense which accompanied it of inward liberty and choice, which gratified our moral yearnings, inasmuch as it would give henceforward to our actions as a people, an origination and direction unquestionably moral - as it was free .... We were intellectualised also in proportion; we looked backward upon the records of the human race with pride, and, instead of being afraid, we delighted to look forward into futurity. It was imagined that this new-born spirit of resistance, rising from the most sacred feelings of the human heart, would diffuse itself through many countries.[22]

Thus involvement in the Peninsular War moralised Britain and strengthened her link with the finest traditions of her past so that she could progress with greater stability and confidence. Just as the French had hoped to export their libertarian principles in the initial stages of the Revolutionary War, so Wordsworth believed that Britain would be able to diffuse her newly-recovered moral spirit and principles throughout Europe during the course of the war.

By 1809 Wordsworth was convinced that the war had become a moral crusade. It was not just a struggle against evil, but also a means of promoting the moral enlightenment of Europe as a whole, including France herself.[23] The despotic designs of France in Spain had vividly dramatised the moral dimension of the conflict to Britain. In Wordsworth's eyes,

the war had ceased to be a political or military affair, but was, essentially, a moral struggle for the soul of Europe, with Britain cast in the principal role of God's own avenging Angel. Ultimate triumph would belong to right, rather than might, and it was Britain that had been given 'the exterminating sword'[24] of justice. Wordsworth increasingly saw the conflict in medieval, chivalric terms which prefigure his feudal-paternalistic view of society and politics in these years. In this moral crusade, the British army, or knight, seemed predestined to triumph. Her victory in 1815 is viewed, by Wordsworth, in his Thanksgiving Ode, as an inevitable outcome:

> Have we not conquered? - by the vengeful sword?
> Ah no, by dint of Magnanimity;
> That curbed the baser passions, and left free
> A loyal band to follow their liege lord
> Clear-sighted Honour, and his staid Compeers
> Along a track of most unnatural years;
> In execution of heroic deeds
> Whose memory, spotless as the crystal beads
> Of morning dew upon the untrodden meads,
> Shall live enrolled above the starry spheres.
> He, who in concert with an earthly string
> Of Britain's acts would sing,
> He with enraptured voice will tell
> Of one whose spirit no reverse could quell.[25]

Indeed, in the final years of the war, Wordsworth became almost fanatical in his support of Britain. Far from the pacific stance he had once upheld in the 1790's, he now gloried in war, provided it was in the service of just, moral principles. He believed that a martial spirit was vital if a nation was to be vigilant in defending its values, independence and freedom:

> no people ever was or can be, independent, free or secure, much less great, in any sane application of the word, without a cultivation of military values.[26]

Wordsworth now regarded a martial spirit as an indicator of a moral spirit. He also followed the Harringtonian argument that a standing army was vital to the sustenance of the free, independent nation of freeholders, which he now favoured. Wordsworth did not merely tolerate war as a regrettable, but necessary means for defeating the evil of France, as he had done at the turn of the century. By 1815 he also gloried in war itself and argued that death in combat was the highest duty one could perform for one's country:

Ye slight not life - to God and Nature true;
But death, becoming death, is dearer far,
When duty bids you bleed in open war.[27]

Death on the battlefield has, here, an intrinsic validity and nobility which it had never been accorded in Wordsworth's earlier verse.

Wordsworth was so convinced of the overriding morality of Britain's war effort, that he sometimes exalted it in rather sickening terms, as in his infamous Ode: 1815, where the moral ends of the conflict are superceded by an obsession with its bloody means. The moral absolutism of Wordsworth's political philosophy, here, attained its ultimate expression. God used the soldiers of Britain to destroy Evil in a final, bloody apocalypse which would restore God's peaceful kingdom on earth:

But Thy most dreaded instrument,
In working out a pure intent,
To Man - arrayed for mutual slaughter,
- Yea, Carnage is thy daughter![28]

In these lines, deleted thirty years later, in 1845, Wordsworth shows his hysterical support for the British army as the direct agent of an Old Testament God. He suggests the natural condition of man is belligerence and the militaristic tone of the poem reinforces the feeling that Wordsworth now regarded the war not as a means to a moral end, but as a divine end in itself. Not surprisingly, these particular lines and Wordsworth's general view of the war caused much controversy, especially among the younger generation of Romantic poets. The passage inspired Shelley to write his satirical poem, Peter Bell the Third (1819).[29]. Wordsworth not only seemed to have sunk himself in a nationalistic defence of the war, but also to have, temporarily, lost his humanitarian spirit. His argument in support of the war was, no longer, that it had to have a moral end, rather it was that Britain had become the moral agent of God on earth and, therefore, any cause she pursued was necessarily moral and just.

In October 1802, when the French army entered Switzerland, the Morning Post reprinted Coleridge's poem, Fears in Solitude (now re-titled Fears of Solitude), which had been composed during the similar events of 1798. Coleridge's alterations to this poem, however, show that he was no longer just disillusioned with France, but had

turned decisively against her as an evil power, in favour of Britain's more virtuous stance. He omitted all but lines 129-197 of the original poem,[30] thus removing all the strictures on the low standard of British morals and government. There emerges, instead, a one-dimensional, anti-French poem, issued only a few months into the peace, but calling for Britain to wage war in a morally pure spirit. The struggle is no longer a balanced one between the two flawed, ambitious nations fighting an unnecessary, damaging war. Coleridge now sees the conflict in morally absolute terms. France was an evil, despotic power and the war against her was, therefore, a moral conflict for the preservation of Christian principles. The war had become not only expedient, but also morally imperative:

> We shall attempt, therefore, to prove, that on the presumption of its expedience, the war is morally just; secondly that it is expedient, and consequently, that the war is both just and wise, not only morally, but likewise politically, just.[31]

Just as Napoleon's leadership had been instrumental in maintaining Coleridge's hopes in France before 1802, so his subsequent actions in peace and war played a major role in shaping Coleridge's moral view of the conflict and in strengthening his patriotism. Coleridge believed that Napoleon had proved himself to be not only an ambitious, despotic ruler and an implacable enemy of Britain, but that he was also Evil Incarnate: the universal enemy of civilisation, freedom and moral values. He was the Devil himself, waging a war to gain the soul of the world and he used the French as his evil disciples:

> For assuredly against Heaven doth that man wage war, whose whole career is in defiance of all the principles which alone give a meaning to our erect form, and entitle us to look toward Heaven as to our natural and destined country.[32]

Napoleon threatened the salvation of all mankind and was 'the enemy of the human race'.[33] It was Napoleon's threat to moral values, rather than his military might, which was ultimately to be feared most.[34] In Coleridge's eyes, it was the unique Devilish aspect of Napoleon's leadership which transformed their war into a more universal, religious struggle between the forces of good and evil.

Like Wordsworth, however, Coleridge recognised that Britain's opposition to the evil of France after 1803 did not necessarily mean

that she was fighting for moral values and principles. Coleridge believed that the Peace of Amiens had failed because it did not address the fundamental moral issues which Napoleon's tyranny had raised. During 1802 and 1803 Britain had merely abandoned principle in the hope of gaining peace at any price - this could never be a true, lasting peace. Coleridge argued that, thereafter, Britain had to recover her old moral spirit and positively fight for virtue and not just respond to a military threat. He claimed that 'there can be no hope of successful resistance, but in an equal union of all the Virtues of the human character'.[35] Britain had to become morally armed, in a conscious way, in order to win and secure peace. Like Wordsworth, Coleridge believed that Britain's participation in the Peninsular campaign played a major role in reminding Britain of her old moral values and of the spirit of liberty and the constitutional principles of the Revolution Settlement which, as we shall see, both poets now most admired:

> the Spanish contest has a separate and additional interest for Englishmen of genuine English principles: for if the Peace of Amiens made the Nation unanimous in its dread of French ambition, it was the noble efforts of Spanish Patriotism that first restored us, without distinction of party, to our characteristic enthusiasm for liberty; and presenting it in its genuine form, incapable of being confounded with its French counterfeit, enabled us once more to utter the names of our Hampdens, Sidneys and Russels, without hazard of alarming the quiet subject, or of offending the zealous loyalist.[36]

Thus, after 1809, Coleridge's view of the war became even more morally polarised. Britain's traditional constitutional principles, recovered in this contest and now protected, and adhered to, by the current Ministry, were seen as a vital contributory element in the nation's moral ascendancy.

When Coleridge reviewed the course of the war in 1816, he concluded that it had had its golden side because it had moralised Britain and, indeed, all of Europe:

> as the war tended to moralise the Nation, so did the Nation succeed finally in moralising the War. On our exploits by Sea and Land, tho' the annals of authentic History record none more glorious, will yet impress the future Historian with less awe, than the Moral Enthusiasm which with all the constancy and evenness of calmest Reason called forth and sustained the heroic spirit.[37]

The experience of the war had proved to be a reciprocal process whereby Britain was first reminded of her old moral principles by the localised struggle in Spain and then proceeded to make the entire war more positively moral by pursuing Christian goals. What had started as a particular ised conflict between two powers had ended as an international moral crusade.

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge never doubted the necessity of armed conflict as a means of establishing peace and moral values in Europe, even although he had been a supporter of the Foxite Whig policy in favour of peace,until 1802. Thereafter, Coleridge decided that nothing but the complete destruction of Napoleon's power would suffice because it was impossible to treat with Evil. Coleridge, increasingly, saw the war as a personalised contest with Napoleon figuring as the Serpent in the Garden. While it might have been possible to sue for peace with France, it was not possible with the Devil himself.[38] In these exceptional circumstances total war was justified as the only means of defeating Evil and so repairing the moral fabric of society.

Coleridge, however,did not glorify bloodshed as Wordsworth tended to do in the final years of the conflict. He did not relish the need for a martial spirit which he considered unnatural to man, and he always regretted the need for war itself. The Christian principles, which he believed were at stake, were the only things which made the war necessary. Nevertheless, he did, reluctantly, accept the need for a standing army. In 1795 he had seen this as a threat to liberty; by the 1810s he regarded it as a bulwark of the nation's independence and its traditional liberties.[39] In general, however, Coleridge had a horror of militarism and saw war as an extremely regrettable course of action, undertaken only in extreme circumstances when the natural force of moral persuasion would not avail. In the 1818 edition of The Friend, he quoted a key passage from his own translation of Schiller's, The Piccolomini, to this effect:

> The way of ancient ordinance, though it winds
> Is yet no devious way. Straight forwards goes
> The ligh tning's path; and straight the fearful path
> Of the cannon-ball. Direct it flies and rapid
> Shattering that it may reach, and shattering what it reaches.
> My so n! the road, the Human Being travels,
> That, on which BLESSING comes and goes, doth follow
> The river's course, the valley's playful windings,
> Curves round the corn-field and the hill of vines,

Honouring the holy bounds of property!
... There exists
An higher than the warrior's excellence.[40]

The natural Christian course of life was always to be preferred to the straight, unnatural trajectory of warfare.

It is clear that Wordsworth and Coleridge now regarded the conflict between Britain and France as a moral contest between Good and Evil, much as Burke had viewed the war against Revolutionary France in the 1790s. This observation caused the two writers to change not only their opinion of the role of France and Britain in the war, but also to alter their view of these two nations' constitutional systems. Until 1802 Wordsworth and Coleridge had believed that the French democratic system had failed because of the violent hostility and subsequent European war which hindered its progress. The Peace of Amiens had provided some respite, yet democratic institutions had not recovered, but, instead, had become the victim of further despotism. The principles of the early republic thus proved to be weak and ineffectual and had, in fact, created the conditions whereby tyranny could flourish. All the predictions of Burke concerning the inevitable anarchy and despotism which would follow the setting up of a republic had proved true.[41] Republicanism itself seemed now to be a flawed system of government. It had failed because of intrinsic inadequacies not just because of adverse circumstances. After 1802, therefore, Wordsworth and Coleridge began to reassess their former regard for republicanism. Rather than stick to their previous attempt to locate democratic values on more stable foundations, they began to reject its principles altogether, as innately flawed, and, instead, they turned to the ancient British constitution as a model political system.

Wordsworth believed that the coronation of Napoleon in 1804 signalled the willing return of France to the type of despotism she had possessed during the ancien regime.[42] Republicanism had proved weak and insubstantial as a political system. It had not only failed to produce just government, but had turned France back full circle to a corrupt absolutism, even more virulent than before. As the Napoleonic War progressed, Wordsworth became convinced that the Republic's failure to support liberty in the 1790s, was the fault of the system itself, rather than the adverse circumstances attending its birth. In The Excursion (1814), Wordsworth's description of the early

Republic is shot through with a cynicism which is foreign to the more nostalgic images in The Prelude. The Republic had initially brought some freedom, but it had also nurtured a blinkered certainty that reason could remould the world. It had neglected the traditional and moral values which Wordsworth now considered to be imperative:

> there arose
> A proud and most presumptuous confidence
> In the transcendent wisdom of the age,
> And her discernment ....
> An infidel contempt of holy writ,
> Stole by degrees upon his mind.[43]

Looking back at the early stages of the Revolution, which he had once admired, Wordsworth realised that it had not been the blissful time of his earlier imaginings: 'A golden palace rose, or seemed to rise'[44] from the wreckage of the Bastille. Rather the Republic was only a semblance of just government. Indeed, in The Excursion, Wordsworth attempted to re-write his own ideological history by claiming that he had become disillusioned by the Revolution before 1793, rather than later.[45] He also chastised the Republic for not establishing a government of 'mild paternal sway'[46] when this had hardly been its intention: this was merely a reflection of the type of government Wordsworth, himself, now favoured in 1814. Thus, in re-interpreting the history of France and his own early enthusiasms, Wordsworth reveals the extent to which he had jettisoned his republican ideals and disassociated his former self from them. By 1818 he was so convinced of the intrinsic faults of republicanism that he was able to encourage voters in Westmorland to vote for the Tory Lowther candidate by warning them of England's fate if it followed republican principles instead of those of the existing constitution:

> Remember what England might have been with an
> Administration countenancing French Doctrines
> at the dawn of the French Revolution, and
> suffering them, as it advanced, to be sown with
> every wind that came across the Channel![47]

By 1802 Coleridge had already recognised pure republicanism to be an inappropriate political system for Europe and he believed that it could only work in an American context. During the Napoleonic Wars, however, Coleridge also concluded that the failure of republicanism could be attributed not merely to adverse external circumstances, but to intrinsic flaws in its fundamental principles. He, too, began to

criticise even the early idealistic years of the Republic which he had once admired.

Under Napoleon, the government of France had returned to absolutism, but Coleridge believed that this was not just the work of one evil man, but was part of a longer process stretching back over the whole course of the Revolution. Republicanism, which emphasised equal individual rights at the expense of fellow feeling, had inexorably produced anarchy and then a consequent demand for firmer governmental control, which had led to despotism. In the following passage, the Calculator's Progress in the Apocrypha parallels the course of the French Republic:

> there he [the reader] will find THE CALCULATOR'S PROGRESS from self-confiding philosophy (or rather psilosophy*) which refuses the aid of all moral instincts, and laughs at 'the voice within' as a superstition - his progress, first, to sensuality, that infallible heart-hardener; and thence to oppression and remorseless cruelty.[48]

[* 'psilosophy' means 'slender wisdom']

The philosophy of republicanism had not been disappointed by the circumstances in which it had to operate; instead, as Burke had predicted, republicanism had created the circumstances which had led to anarchy and oppression. It was an intrinsically self-created, immoral system which had inexorably led to evil. Thus, in The Statesman's Manual (1816), when Coleridge tried to account for the failure of the French Revolution, he blamed it mostly on 'the predominance of a presumptuous and irreligious philosophy'.[49]

After 1802 Coleridge increasingly believed republicanism to be a disruptive doctrine, unsuited to the character of man. In a letter to T.G. Street of the Courier, in 1813, Coleridge argued that, although the experience of the Revolution had uncovered the flaws in republicanism, it had also alerted people to the true political principles of government. It had demonstrated the need for all political systems to be grounded in the natural character and rights of man as part of existing society, rather than in a theoretical state of nature. This also entailed an adherence to the traditional hierarchical structure of society:

> [There were] two great results of the French Revolution, namely, the volcanic Horrors of governments founded ... in the mere personality of man, instead of civil rights,

> as property, birth, religion, etc. - and on the other hand ... the influence, direct and indirect, of a gradation of all ranks, in the formation and in the operations, of the actual government in being.[50]

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge tried to tinker with the evidence that he had once subscribed to a more democratic ideal. In the 1818 edition of The Friend he went as far as to reprint one of his 1795 Bristol Lectures in order to prove the consistency of his views. Although it is true that Coleridge had never been a Jacobin, he reprinted the lecture with dozens of embarrassing passages omitted, so that his early views seemed much less radical than before. He omitted the famous passage calling for an equality of condition before men could become possessed of equal political rights.[51] Shorn of this paragraph, what followed became a refutation of republicanism as a philosophy adaptable to the character of man. Whereas Coleridge had once argued that it was possible to equalise people's condition, and thus make republicanism an appropriate system of government, he now removed this possibility and left the bald statement:

> the comparable wisdom of political systems depends necessarily on the manners and capacities of the recipients.[52]

Since he no longer mentions that the condition of these people can be improved, the altered text now suggests that these manners and capacities are fixed social facts, and that all political systems had to reflect the ranks, gradations and differences of existing society. Republicanism, which rested on equal, individual rights, was inappropriate for this task. In this way, Coleridge tried to suggest that, even in 1795, he had not advocated the equalisation of people's condition or a republican system of government.

Wordsworth's and Coleridge's regard for the war as a moral crusade not only transformed their opinion of France and its early republicanism, but also caused them to revise their viewsof the British government and parliamentary opposition. Until the early 1800s both Wordsworth and Coleridge had boasted that they did not subscribe to any particular party, but were independent observers of the political scene. There is no doubt, however, that their views had accorded with the Foxite Whigs on most matters. After 1803 all this was to change. Since both writers believed that Napoleon represented Evil itself, they were

naturally predisposed to a government which had taken the step of declaring war against him. Some of the early nineteenth century Ministries did attract their criticism and the Convention of Cintra agreement was attacked as a piece of inept statesmanship. It was a humiliating and needless treaty which had dishonoured Britain and had entailed the abandonment of allies.[53] This was, however, one of the very few blots on the government's record. As the war progressed and Britain's moral commitment grew, Wordsworth and Coleridge increasingly identified the Tory Administration as God's instrument on earth. The Opposition, which continued to press for peace, appeared more and more to be the disciple of the Devil, secretly undermining the government's moral endeavours and acting as the evil agents of France.

Wordsworth gradually became a convert to a party system of government. He was to argue that one of the chief glories of the British constitution was the division between the two parties of Government and Opposition. He justified party in its most ideal form by arguing:

> Conscience regulated by expediency, is the basis; honour, binding men to each other in spite of temptation, is the corner-stone; and the super-structure is friendship, protecting kindness, gratitude, and all the moral sentiments by which self-interest is liberalised. Such is party, looked at on the favourable side.[54]

This ideal had not been accomplished during the war years because the Whig Opposition had been power-hungry and had lacked principle. Wordsworth believed that only the Tory Ministries had adhered to these party principles and deserved support. In the era when the Whigs and Tories were just re-emerging as distinct parties, Wordsworth argued that only the latter constituted a true 'party', with principles; the Whigs were merely a group, united in their desire for power.

Wordsworth credited the Tory government with Britain's success in the war. In 1804 Britain stood alone against France and was the sole upholder of liberty:

> that last spot of earth where Freedom now
> Stands single in her only sanctuary.[55]

This happy, but precarious, state of liberty was due to the Government's effective prosecution of the war. The 'Tory' Ministry ensured that the nation was always 'foremost in the field'[56] against Napoleon, 'the

bold Arch-Despot'[57] of Europe. By the conclusion of the war Wordsworth was convinced that only the Tory ministry had embodied, and given direction to the nation's moral spirit. It had also withstood Napoleon more consistently than any other European government. In his Westmorland Address (1818), Wordsworth looked up to the government 'with respectful attachment'[58] and believed that its policies had proved to be so just, beneficial and moral that anyone who opposed it in the election not only deserved to lose, but ought to have been prevented from standing![59] He believed the principles which the government embodied could be universally endorsed by all right-thinking people. The war had proved the Tories to be the most patriotic, principled and moral party, whereas the Opposition Whigs were merely the weak, unprincipled, unpatriotic friends of the nation's enemy:

> [The Tory Ministers had] proved themselves worthy of being entrusted with the fate of Europe. While the Opposition were taking counsel from their fears, and recommending despair - while they continued to magnify without scruple the strength of the Enemy, and to expose, misrepresent, and therefore increase the weaknesses of their country, his Majesty's Ministers were not dented, though often discouraged: they struggled up against adversity with fortitude, and persevered heroically; throwing themselves upon the honour and wisdom of the Country, and trusting for the issue to the decrees of a just PROVIDENCE: and for this determination everlasting gratitude will attend them![60]

Wordsworth believed that the principles and interests of the Tory party were also those of the nation. The Tory party alone, venerated 'the happy and glorious Constitution, in Church and State, which we have inherited from our Ancestors'.[61] The party's success as a government and the victory it had secured in the war, was a direct result of its following the true moral principles which Wordsworth now believed to reside in the existing Constitution. From the time when Fox had visited the despot, Napoleon, in 1802, the Whigs had deserted these constitutional principles and had become untrustworthy and unpatriotic. Wordsworth thus identified the Tories as the party of truth and morality and associated them with Nature itself, whereas he characterised the Whigs as the party of vice, drawing their support from the immoral cities.[62] Thus, the war completely reversed Wordsworth's former political allegiances. When Wordsworth met his old hero Fox, in 1806, months before the latter's death, Fox is said to have remarked, 'I am glad to

see Mr. Wordsworth, that we differ as much in our view of politics as we do in our views of poetry'. Wordsworth replied, 'But in Poetry you must admit that I am the Whig and you the Tory'.[63] In politics, the reverse was already true.

Throughout the war, Coleridge continued to advocate the need for an independent, non-party stance in politics. During this time, however, he also praised the achievements of the government and wrote for the pro-government newspaper, the Courier. He reconciled these seemingly paradoxical positions by arguing that if one took an objective, independent view of events, then one would naturally support the 'Tory' Ministries and their principles. He believed that the government, alone, followed Britain's traditional constitutional ideals. Its policy of pursuing a war against evil was manifestly just and in the national interest. In these circumstances, the existence of any Opposition, or any other party, was traitorous: 'all party in the present awful exigence is faction in the worst sense of the word'.[64] Coleridge's constant call for the country to think independently and unite behind true principles, irrespective of party feelings, was, in effect, a call to rally round the Tory Ministry.[65]

Coleridge's view of the Pittites and the Whigs changed swiftly and dramatically after 1802. As his opinion of Napoleon plummeted, Pitt's star rose. Pitt's distrust of Napoleon, and his pacific overtures, had now been proved well-founded. Coleridge therefore revised his opinion of Pitt and now recognised him as one of 'the greatest men', far above his contemporaries in percipience and understanding:

> He knows his own power, his own superiority, and looks over all their heads as over children, at objects of real magnitude and deep interest.[66]

Nevertheless, Coleridge believed that Pitt was still too aloof from the nation, and therefore he could not rank alongside Washington, who was at one with his people.[67] Pitt, however, had now entered Coleridge's pantheon of great world leaders and Coleridge even went so far as to retract his former criticism of the Prime Minister in poems such as Fire, Famine and Slaughter (1796-98).[68]

As Coleridge revised his outlook on Pitt, so his estimate of Fox fell. Like Wordsworth, Coleridge was disappointed by Fox's visit to Napoleon in 1802. In continuing to advocate peace after 1803,

Coleridge believed that Fox had betrayed his true libertarian principles and had done his nation a disservice. Coleridge's charges against Fox echo those made by Burke against Lord Malmesbury's embassy to France in 1796 contained in his Letters on a Regicide Peace (1796).[69] Once again, Burke seemed to be the very model of percipience. Just as Burke had recognised, when deserting his old friends, Fox, and the Whigs, so the Opposition now also seemed to Coleridge to be a group of unprincipled, unpatriotic politicians. They had deserted the ideals of the constitution for personal power.

Coleridge was not so convinced of the worth of some of the short-lived Ministries which held power after Pitt's death in 1806, but he did still believe that they were the best the country could expect.[70] When Spencer Perceval became Prime Minister in 1809, Coleridge was again able to identify completely with the government and its policies. Once more, it was personality which strengthened Coleridge's political views. He saw the honest Perceval as 'not unworthy a disciple of the immortal Pitt.'[71] During his Ministry it seemed to Coleridge that Britain became consciously committed to the moral enlightenment of Europe. Coleridge's affinity for the Tory Ministry was also increased in 1811 and 1812 when his own pro-government paper, the Courier, came under renewed attack from the Whig Morning Chronicle. Coleridge was drawn into a spirited attack on the Opposition's plans for an early peace which he believed would destroy the hope of a moral victory achieved only when Napoleon was utterly defeated. He characterised the Whigs as dangerous, immoral 'Jacobins': using the term in the same imprecise, abusive way that he had once chastised Pitt for doing, in the 1790s.[72] Perceval's Ministry was now seen, even more strongly, as the very embodiment of sound moral principles. Coleridge's obituary, for Perceval, after his assassination in 1812, was a panegyric on the man, and his party, as the moral guardians of the nation:

> We behold a man beloved and revered by all who knew him: in private life not only virtuous, but even innocent and exemplary in all the relations of a moral being, to his god, his country, his family and his friends ... a man, who equally with our greatest statesmen since the Revolution, had profoundly studied, and conscientiously acted upon, the balance of the constitution ... (who had) a firm attachment to those principles and institutions religious and political, under which Great Britain had become the proudest name of history.[73]

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge's unswerving support for the wartime Tory administrations rested not only on their prosecution of a moral war, but also on the fact that they defended the traditional values of British society and her constitution. Indeed, the two functions were interdependent: Britain's time-honoured constitution was innately moral and inspired virtuous action. Lord Liverpool's government proved to be as morally committed as Perceval's and so, in 1817, Coleridge was able to review the war years and conclude that it was each successive Tory government's pursuit of traditional constitutional principles which had ensured Britain's moral supremacy and the victory of Christian values in Europe. He praised,

> those principles on which, amid the bark, yelp, and howl of faction, the Executive of Great Britain had preserved their own country, and finally rescued the whole civilised world from the most satanic enormous complication of physical, moral, and political calamities that even visited Christendom.[74]

The events of the war, after 1802, thus had a dramatic effect on the political affiliations of Wordsworth and Coleridge. The two writers came to identify with their own nation, the 'Tory' government and its constitutional principles. Viewed against the moral polarities of the war, these seemed to represent the forces of virtue and Christian morality. The equivocations and uncertainties, explored in Section I, were dispelled in favour of a new political certainty. It now appeared to Wordsworth and Coleridge that the best political system for Britain were existing constitutional practices. These had served the nation well in the past, and continued to do so in the present. While French republicanism had inexorably led to despotism, and the whole of Europe had fallen under military oppression, the British constitution had preserved the liberty of the nation and ensured her moral supremacy. The stable, reliable institutions and principles of the British constitution had served the nation well, proving to be as pragmatic, as they were time-honoured. Wordsworth and Coleridge were, therefore, to abandon their attempt to democratise the British political system and, instead, turned to a defence of the existing constitution. The grounds for this defence were that the constitution was an expression of the nation state; it was based on traditional principles that had served the nation well in the past; and, finally, it was still a pragmatic system suited to present needs.

CHAPTER V

THE GROUNDS FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE CONSTITUTION

(a) Nationalism

In the 1790s Wordsworth and Coleridge, in common with other radicals, had been torn between a natural love of country and their belief in the republican system of the nation's enemy, France. After 1802, both writers had lost faith in France and in republicanism, and regarded Britain in a new moral light. At last their patriotic feelings did not have to be restrained and they could identify with the nation rationally, as well as emotionally. The nation state became the focus for all their political thought and the traditional constitution, as an expression of that state, was defended on nationalist grounds.

Since Britain had proved itself to be the agent of God in the war, anything which was derived from the national experience of such a virtuous country had to have a moral currency. This section will explore what Wordsworth and Coleridge meant when they appealed to 'nationalism' as a justification for the worth of the existing social and political structure of Britain.

In many ways the modern idea of nationalism was the creation of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By 1815, in England, Germany, and France particularly, there was a developing consciousness of national problems, institutions and cultures, rather than the mere patriotic love of country, community or city that had existed before. A 'nation' is usually understood to be a social group delineated by certain shared characteristics: race, territory, language, history and culture; and to be a politically independent country with its own distinct constitution, social structure, religion and economy. There is usually also a vaguer national feeling or pride which binds these elements together. Obviously not all of these need necessarily be present at any one time for nationalism to flourish, but it does appear that in the years between 1789 and 1815 these common bonds were forming or, at least, perceived to be working in harness, for the first time.

Most of these elements can be found within Wordsworth's and Coleridge's conception of nationalism and, in many respects, their

definition of the term is representative of writing on this subject in the first half of the nineteenth century. Before exploring their precise definition of the concept, it should be noted that they drew careful distinctions between nationalism and the appeal to patriotism, imperialism or cosmopolitanism, each of which appeared spurious to them.

Although Wordsworth and Coleridge wrote copiously on the 'nation state', the 'spirit of nationality' and on 'national independence', they did not actually use the word 'nationalism' (which was coined later in the century.[1]) The term they use most often is 'patriotism', but the patriotism mentioned in their work during the 1790s is very different from the type of patriotism which they came to admire during the Napoleonic Wars. The former type of patriotism constituted a universal, emotional feeling or love for one's native land and its people. The latter type is nationalism, in all but name, for it involved an emotional, but also rational, attachment to the distinct nation state of England; its land, people and traditions, as well as its existing constitution. The distinction between these two types of patriotism needs close analysis and, to avoid confusion, the term 'nationalism' will be employed to describe the species of patriotism which preoccupied the two writers between 1802 and 1815.

Long before 1802, and their adoption of a more conservative brand of politics, Wordsworth and Coleridge had written much about their patriotic love of country, but, by this, they meant an emotional affection for the countryside and the common people who lived in rural areas and were at one with the land they worked. In The Prelude (1805) Wordsworth remarks of this time that:

> [I] did soon
> Become a patriot - and my heart was all
> Given to the people, and my love was theirs.[2]

This patriotism was a universal emotion which did not necessarily encompass a similar regard for one's own political state and constitutions. Indeed, in this particular passage, Wordsworth refers to his patriotic regard for the French peasants in the 1790s. He loved and trusted them as much as the common people of England.

This definition of patriotism as a love for the common people, rather than a distinct nation state, was especially useful in the 179os for it allowed Wordsworth and Coleridge to claim that they could be

patriotic yet still support France in the war. Indeed, they argued that it was the duty of true patriots to support the 'enemy', for only if France won the war might there arise the opportunity for a vital practical reform of the British constitution. Coleridge argued that the hallmark of real patriots was their support for France in the war.[3]

After 1802, however, Wordsworth and Coleridge evolved a quite different view of patriotism. They wrote less about universal, patriotic feelings and more about the fight for national independence and the virtues of the nation state and its existing constitutional framework.[4] The old patriotic feeling for land and people still had a vital role to play within this new conception of nationalism, but it was not synonymous with it. In an 1809 Courier article, Coleridge argued:

> It is the lot, Sir, of some nations only to be at once a state and a country. Kingdoms and Empires exist without a patriotic feeling. But wherever this ennobling privilege is inherited, every citizen has a power within him, of which he himself in ordinary times is not aware.[5]

Patriotism united the nation in an emotional sense and inspired its citizens beyond the more mundane actions of those people who lived in states where this patriotic feeling did not exist. As this passage also implies, however, nationalism was more than just the emotion of patriotism. It was also a rational force. Wordsworth praised the 'rational patriotism'[6] of the Spanish in the Peninsular Campaign. They had not just responded emotionally to the French threat, but had also acted with a reasoned regard for those traditional principles and institutions of their country that they wished to restore. This was true nationalism. While patriotism was a useful, but rather vague, emotional response, befitting the universalist philosophies of the eighteenth century; nationalism seemed, to Wordsworth and Coleridge, a more distinct and purposeful expression of a people constituted as a nation state.

Wordsworth and Coleridge also sought to distinguish between nationalism and imperialism. Both writers had noted how the French army, in the early years of the Revolutionary Wars, had claimed to be exporting libertarian principles and encouraging free, independent nations to arise in Europe. These nationalist ideals had led, however,

to imperial ambition and, under Napoleon, the French Empire threatened to overwhelm Europe. Wordsworth and Coleridge tried to distinguish between true nationalism and imperialism. Wordsworth argued that nations had to be left alone to devise their own constitution. Only if a defenceless country was endangered by invasion, might another come to its aid - and only then to preserve that country's liberty and independence. If a nation intervened abroad, as Britain had in Spain, it had to be for a moral end and not for aggrandisement. In 1816 Wordsworth argued that Britain, during the war, had been a perfect example of this true nationalist policy in action. Since Britain was an island, incapable of expanding beyond her coasts, her interventions abroad were for moral purposes and not for imperial conquest:

> The same insular position which, by rendering territorial incorporation impossible, utterly precludes the desire of conquest under the most seductive shape it can assume.[7]

Thus, Britain's actions in Europe were truly nationalist. She aided weaker countries to gain their national independence or to withstand the threat of national conquest. The opportunity to act in this pure nationalist way had elevated the thoughts and feelings of her citizens and strengthened her own national identity:

> Such are the privileges of her [island] situation; and, by permitting, they invite her to give way to the courageous instincts of human nature, and to strengthen and refine them by culture.[8]

Although other countries lacked Britain's geographical advantages, British nationalism, in all its moral vigour, was the great example that other nations should emulate. Wordsworth's argument, however, failed to consider that Britain could still pursue imperial designs eleswhere in the world. This was a point which Coleridge did not overlook in his more detailed analysis of the relationship between nationalism and imperialism.

Coleridge also believed that the nation state had geographical boundaries beyond which it could not extend too far, without losing those virtues of nationalism itself: independence and liberty. Distinct borders were required to preserve the social cohesion and the political consensus which were the hallmarks of an integrated, secure nation state. Even France itself, the national centre and force behind Napoleon's empire, was in danger of losing its sense of nationalism under the imperial

tyrant:

> for the victor Nation itself must at length, by the very extension of its own Conquests, sink into a mere Province; nay, it will most probably become the most abject portion of the Empire, and the most cruelly oppressed, both because it will be more feared and suspected by the common Tyrant, and because it will be the sink and centre of his luxury and corruption.[9]

Coleridge did see hope, however, in the irony that an empire, such as Napoleon's, which rested on despotism, rather than on national consensus, could still become a catalyst for nationalism. Ultimately, Napoleon's imperialist tyranny would cause nationalist feeling to grow, not ebb away. The actions of the French army in Spain had revived its old national feeling for independence and liberty.

Although Coleridge had written against the British Empire in the 1790s, his attitude to it changed during his term as a journalist on the Courier, after 1804. He recognised that it seemed hypocritical to encourage national independence among European countries under the yoke of France, whilst also praising the strategic and economic importance of the British Empire which dominated foreign lands. Coleridge contended that the British Empire had, however, a more moral character than the French. Britain's empire had been founded to spread moral values and civilisation, and not to enslave people or acquire territories. In The Friend (1809), he linked the two indissolubly: 'the independence of the British Empire and the progressive civilisation of all Mankind'.[10] Britain had built its empire, not by conquering existing nations as France had done, but by planting colonies in primitive parts, or in areas of the world where liberty, moral values and civilisation were either absent or endangered. Through the agency of the British Empire these missing qualities would be promoted and, eventually, the colonies might themselves become fully-fledged nations with their own distinct social and political structures.[11] Whereas the French Empire tried to crush nationalism and the virtues which flowed from it, the British Empire was a force for true moral nationalism. In these precise circumstances imperialism could be justified as an aid to nationalism.

Wordsworth and Coleridge also limited their definition of nationalism by exploring its relationship with cosmopolitanism. In the 18th century, great value had been placed on being a citizen of the world. There was

an emphasis on universal laws, rights and duties. As the course of the French Revolution became more violent, however, and its attempts to extend its universal principles throughout Europe degenerated into an excuse for imperialism, most of the former radical sympathisers began to view a cosmopolitan world with universal values as a dangerous and unattainable abstract vision. The nation state appeared a more stable and practical basis or home for an ideal society and constitution.

Wordsworth always believed that there was a common humanity at the root of man's social condition which transcended national boundaries. After 1802, however, he argued that this universal benevolence and brotherliness needed a more practical basis which could be best provided by the nation state. The nation was not an abstract, meaningless concept, but possessed a particularity that made it cherishable. Only by participating fully in the national group could man's finer feelings flourish and find practical expression. Through national endeavours, institutions and laws, man's moral spirit could be realised and grow till it embraced the whole human race in a spirit of fraternity:

> The vigour of the human soul is from without and from futurity, - in breaking down limit, and losing and forgetting herself in the sensation and image of Country and of the human race; and, when she returns and is most restricted and confined, her dignity consists in the contemplation of a better and more exalted being, which, though proceeding from herself, she loves and is devoted to as to another.[12]

Thus, losing oneself in feeling for one's country, as well as in love for the human race, was a more precise, controlled, but also practical, way of realising universal, cosmopolitan feelings and values. Nationalism was not the antithesis of cosmopolitanism, but the educt through which it could achieve social relevance.

Coleridge was more sceptical than Wordsworth about the value of cosmopolitanism or of any abstract principle, although his attempts to establish a pantisocracy in 1794 had been based on universal ideals.[13] After the abandonment of this scheme, Coleridge's thoughts turned, gradually, to the nation as the most practical focus for political systems. He still recognised that the world was composed of 'coordinate nations'[14], each distinct yet also inter-dependent and occupied partly with universal concerns. Cosmopolitan values, themselves, however, had little worth or meaning until filtrated through national forms and feelings.

The O.E.D. credits Coleridge with the second usage of the term 'cosmopolitism'(sic) in The Friend (1809)[15], in which he vehemently attacked it as a false philosophy. Coleridge argued that nationalism had greater meaning and value because the nation state had a distinctive character which could be grasped by all and could inspire them in a practical sense. It was real to the imagination of its citizens. Mankind, considered apart from nationality, was too abstract a concept to be grasped by the imagination, and too empty an ideal to be loved. It was,

> a false Philosophy or mistaken Religion, which would persuade him [man] that Cosmopolitism is nobler than Nationality, and the human Race a sublimer object of love than a People.[16]

To teach the average man to love mankind, instead of his own nation, was to teach him to love no one but himself.

Although it might seem that the appeal to nationalism was much narrower than cosmopolitanism, Coleridge argued that it was, in fact, the more liberal doctrine. Cosmopolitanism was abstract and vague; it was an idea that led back to the self, and it was an appeal that could easily be manipulated, just as French universal ideals had proved weak in withstanding despotism. Nationalism was the more profound, inspiring, altruistic concept: pragmatic and more genuinely universal in its concerns. Coleridge believed that, far from restricting or denying universal feelings and principles, nationalism protected them. Even great men such as Plato, Luther and Newton, whose work and significance knew no national boundaries, could only have benefited mankind in this way because they operated from a secure, national basis.[17] Inspired by national ideals, men's thoughts were raised above the ordinary level to contemplate higher truths and principles, applicable to all mankind. Cosmopolitan truths could also find practical expression through national institutions and laws, and thus universal principles could become more meaningful and cherishable to society as a whole. Coleridge, therefore, envisaged a circular, interfusing relationship between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, whereby cosmopolitan values were realised in more pragmatic form through the structures of the nation state and, in the process, the concept of nationalism was enriched and radiated by universal principles and feelings. Coleridge phrased it more succinctly: 'This is indeed Cosmopolitism, at once the Nursling and the Nurse of patriotic affection!'[18]

It is clear that Wordsworth and Coleridge argued that nationalism was an inspiring force in politics because it united all the finest qualities of patriotism, imperialism and cosmopolitanism, while avoiding the excesses of each. Nationalism fed on patriotic feeling, but it was a more rational and specific force; imperialist tendencies were avoided by its more moral interest in colonisation; cosmopolitan principles achieved practical realisation through the medium of the nation state. The three elements defined the limits within which nationalism could operate. It is now time to investigate the other component parts of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's idea of nationalism which made it such a valuable means for defending the existing constitution of the nation.

When Wordsworth and Coleridge defended the constitution on nationalist principles they did so because they believed this political system appealed to man in his natural state, i.e., the state of man in national society. This society was held together by a spirit of nationalism which was both natural and benevolent. It comprised a feeling for the countryside, a belief in the social unity of the nation, an idea of the nation as an image or state of mind and, finally, a recognition of the nation as a moral entity. A sound constitution had to embody, or be inspired by, these concepts.

Since most of the writing, by Wordsworth and Coleridge, on the nation state dates from 1802 onwards, it is tempting to see their nationalism merely as a conservative reaction to events abroad. As we have seen, these certainly crystallised their feelings, but many of the components of their nationalist belief evolved from the 1790s and were long in gestation. Their feeling for the national countryside was one such idea. Even though nations are comprised of a variety of different landscapes, usually it is only the topography of one's own local region that is loved and this becomes, by association, a love for the nation as a whole. The Lake District became, for Wordsworth and Coleridge, the quintessential countryside of Britain and the real heart of the nation.

In their poetry of the 1790s both writers had praised Nature as the fountain of all fine emotions and moral principles. These virtues, emanating from Nature, they later saw embodied, and given practical force, in the spirit of nationalism. Nationalism drew its strength

from Nature, and a feeling for nature and its virtues was a hallmark of the true patriot. Coleridge praised Lord Stanhope, who

> Hast spoke the language of a Free-born mind
> Pleading the cause of Nature! Still pursue
> Thy path of Honour! - To the Country true,
> Still watching th' expiring flame of liberty!
> O Patriot![19]

The rural landscape of the nation, whether it be England, France or America was the greatest promoter of patriotic feeling. As Wordsworth and Coleridge began to appreciate Britain's special moral status in the war after 1802, they did, however, see particular value in their own native countryside. Significantly, the opening poem of Wordsworth's sonnet sequence, Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty, begins with an image of yearning for his own nation, seen afresh from a foreign shore. Composed by the Sea-Side near Calais, August 1802 is a poem which celebrates the special virtues of Wordsworth's native country. He prized the gentle, comforting landscape of England all the more, when it was contrasted with the bitter disappointment he felt for France; it seemed a symbol of the nation's stability and worth:

> Fair star of evening, Splendour of the west
> Star of my Country! - on the horizon's brink
> Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
> On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest
> Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
> Conspicuous to the Nations.[20]

It was also at this juncture, in 1802, that Coleridge chose to issue the truncated version of Fears in Solitude (1798), discussed in the previous chapter. It was shorn of all Coleridge's past criticisms of the nation and what remained was a hymn of admiration and love for his native land. The glory of England and her countryside now shone forth as the one certain truth in Coleridge's mind. While France had finally disappointed all his hopes, England was now the one, great consolation which still inspired him and held out the promise of a more moral future:

> How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
> To me, who from thy lakes and mountain - hills,
> Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
> Have drunk in all my intellectual life,
> All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
> All adoration of the God in nature,
> All lovely and all honourable things,

Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joy and greatness of its future being?
There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country! O divine
And beauteous island! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me.[21]

Thus, the English countryside acquired, for Coleridge, a special spiritual, enlightening influence to be found nowhere else. God himself had singled out the island for divine election. The countryside of the nation, blessed by God, had become an instrument of God's benevolence and English nationalism had attained the status of a mighty moral force.

Thus, a feeling for the countryside was an important component of nationalism and, after 1802, Wordsworth and Coleridge began to stress how they found the English landscape to be uniquely inspiring. An emotional attachment to the English country seemed to promote a moral spirit. When the question of property rights are discussed in the following chapter, it will also be seen that both writers argued that it was the landed classes who were most susceptible to this moral feeling and were able to apply it in a socially useful way. After 1802, they believed these propertied classes, who had a real, material stake in the countryside, represented the national interest in its purest, most stable form. Their sense of nationalism was the most reliable, and it marked them out as the ruling class.

Wordsworth and Coleridge also appealed to nationalism as a socially unifying force: a feeling which comprised all the people as one national unit. In the 1790s, both writers had been attracted to the national patriotism of the French as a movement which involved all the people, including the lower orders. Wordsworth and Coleridge were drawn to the work of Bolingbroke, Montesquieu and Rousseau, who had begun to identify the national interest with that of the people. The attempts of French revolutionaries to put these ideas into practice by forming a truly 'national' government, representing all the people and their equal, individual rights, had appealed to the republican sentiments of the two poets.[22] They were attracted by the idea, embedded in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) that the nation was the source of all sovereignty[23], and, therefore, to represent all the people in the nation, there had to be a democratic system of government. Thus, they first came to admire patriotism as a force

which was intimately linked with democratic politics and as an instrument which could promote the liberty, equality and happiness of every citizen no matter how lowly. Patriotism was a worthy spirit because it was a democratic force: an expression of the equal rights of every individual in the nation.

After 1793 as the war against France progressed, the cause of nationalism was appropriated by conservative circles and began to connote a love of the existing constitution and social structure, as it had developed over centuries. As we have argued, it was in this sense that the two poets defined the term after 1802. Nevertheless, although they no longer advocated nationalism as a democratic force, they still justified it as a unifying concept which embraced the whole nation. In his Convention of Cintra pamphlet of 1809, Wordsworth described nation states as 'aggregates of individuals',[24] united by common thoughts and feelings into a family, within which each individual could reach his highest potential, while yet remaining an interdependent part of the whole. When he translated this idea into practical political terms, however, Wordsworth no longer argued that it necessitated a democratic constitution. Since all citizens were interconnected as part of one nation and had social duties to perform as well as rights to claim, a government could be formed which would function for the entire nation without necessarily being a national government of all the people. Wordsworth argued that the landed classes were the natural rulers of society and were best equipped to govern in the interests of all.[25] Not only did they have a secure material stake in the nation through their property, which gave them independence and leisure but they were also the best educated, and politically experienced, class. Government, in their hands, would ensure that all the nation's interests were represented by the most responsible class, while avoiding the risk of the instability or the anarchy of an open domocracy. In this way Wordsworth was able to support nationalism as a force which united and involved all the people, but which also dictated support for the existing, property-based constitution.

Coleridge's argument on these points is very similar to Wordsworth's. He also described nation states as 'an aggregate of confederated individuals living in a certain district'.[26] The popular basis of nationalism was vital for Coleridge and to be 'one of the People' was

the highest praise he could bestow on a national politician, reserving it for great statesmen such as Washington.[27] By the turn of the century, however, Coleridge no longer argued that the government had to be constituted in a democratic fashion. National politicians did not have to be directly elected by the people to feel for them and govern in their interests. They could still be at one 'with' the people while not being 'of' them. Coleridge regarded society as one interdependent organism bound together by reciprocal rights and duties. Since each class had a duty to show concern for all the other classes, it was not necessary that every individual be democratically represented in parliament in order that government should reflect the national interest. Indeed, it was not only unnecessary, but impossible, for, if one accepted social duties, there could be no such thing as a universal, individual right to sovereignty:

> [It was] the acknowledged truth, that in all countries both Governments and subjects have duties - duties both to themselves and each other; - that between this truism and the Jacobinical doctrine of the universal inalienable right of all the inhabitants of every country to the exercise of their inherent sovereignty, there is no intermediate step, no middle meaning'.[28]

Thus, Coleridge also concluded that, though a government had to represent the wishes and interests of all people in the nation, it did not need to be, nor in fact could it be, democratically constituted. A political system which acknowledged the interdependence and bonds of duty within society would promote a more integrated, morally responsible and cohesive nation state. Nationalism, founded on the duties of all, rather than on universal rights, was an altogether stronger force. Like Wordsworth, Coleridge was to argue that the existing British constitution best served the national interest because it embodied the three elements of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy in an interdependent relationship. The constitution was grounded in property rights which gave it stability, and the middle and landed classes, who owned most of the nation's property, were in the best position to represent the interests of their workers and tenants in a secure, reliable way. Having a physical stake in the nation and its prosperity, the interest of the upper classes <u>was</u> the national interest.[29] Therefore, although the nation was a body made up of all its citizens, some of the organs of that body politic were more

important than others, and government was most securely held by them. Each organ of the nation was, however, still vital to the life of the whole, and, since the lower orders were necessarily interconnected with the propertied classes, their interests had to be adhered to and served. Nationalism, for Coleridge, had to be an expression of the national organism, as currently constituted, rather than an expression of all the people. It was a force which was defined by the interests of its dominant organs, the propertied classes, who were, in turn, responsible for the interests of the nation as a whole. Thus, nationalism was a force which justified the type of property-based constitution Britain possessed.[30]

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge claimed therefore that nationalism was an important, reliable force in politics because it was an expression of all the people constituted as a traditionally defined nation state. It entailed a regard for the existing political and social structure. Their definition of nationalism rested on the idea of man's natural state being that of national society rather than the radical version which was grounded in an egalitarian state of nature. Both poets also argued that nationalism was not just an expression of the current national structure, but that this structure achieved coherence through an indefinable 'national feeling' which suffused and inspired all its citizens. Wordsworth and Coleridge were here partly indebted to Herder's idea that the nation was the end product of a spirit or a will of the people.

In the sonnet, O'erweening Statesmen have full long relied ... (1810), Wordsworth argued that 'from within proceeds a Nation's health'.[31] The nation had a soul which derived from the collective feelings of the people - a spirit which animated it and distinguished one nation from another. Wordsworth believed that if a race failed to live up to its moral and political principles, as the Germans had done by capitulating to the French, then this was because their national feeling, or spirit, was not sufficiently developed. The Germans had been too rational and not displayed enough national spirit in the way they had conducted the war. Unlike the Tyrolese, the Germans had defended their rights, and based all their actions, on calculated rational principles, rather than on the national feeling which was needed to animate those principles. If a nation was to remain strong, united and purposeful,

it had to cultivate a distinct national feeling as well as act in a rational way:

> What it is but a vain and curious skill,
> If sapient Germany must lie deprest,
> Beneath the brutal sword? - Her haughty Schools
> Shall blush; and may not we with sorrow say,
> A few strong instincts and a few plain rules,
> Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
> More for mankind at this unhappy day
> Than all the pride of intellect and thought?[32]

Thus, a nation had to be bound together by a shared spirit, or purpose, which was essentially simple and moral. Nationalism was derived from this collective will of the people to protect their own traditional principles and institutions.

Coleridge also argued that there was an 'invisible spirit that breathes through a whole people'[33] and this united them as one distinct nation. He differentiated nations, not so much by their actions, but by this spirit which animated their actions. Even if other national characteristics were lacking, or weak, this 'high national sense'[34] would still help to form and support a distinctive nation:

> I hold likewise that the difference of nations, their relative grandeur and meanness ... are the result of this spirit: and when this spirit dies, the tree may indeed stand on by its weight and mechanic equipoise ... it waits but for the first gust to level it with the earth.[35]

Coleridge argued that this national spirit was only present in a country that was organically united and interdependent. He believed the nation to be a paradigm of the organism of life itself. It was a living, growing body which was composed of distinct, but interdependent parts. It thus expressed, in practical form, the unity, but also the omneity, of the world. The national spirit, which suffused an organically composed nation, was, therefore, a product of diverse thoughts, feelings and actions, which were distinct, but were also composed into a national consensus. Coleridge delineated the spirit of the true patriot in this way:

> He will reverence not only whatever tends to make the component Individuals more happy, and more worthy of happiness; but likewise whatever tends to bind them more closely together, as a People; that as a multitude of parts and functions make up one human body,

> so the whole multitude of his Countrymen may, by the visible and invisible influences of religion, language, laws, customs, and the reciprocal dependence and re-action of trade and agriculture, be organised into one body politic.[36]

Thus, the national spirit, which pervaded the country and helped to differentiate it from other nations, was born from a reverence for that country's distinct institutions, laws and customs. The spirit organised these elements into unified feeling for the whole. The national spirit arose from the traditional elements of national life, while, simultaneously, it helped to shape them into an idea of the nation.

When Wordsworth and Coleridge appealed to nationalism, therefore, they appealed to a force which represented the collective spirit of the nation. That spirit was based on a reverence and feeling for the rules and principles of the nation, as presently constituted. Nationalism presupposed an idea of the nation which could not be constructed by abstract rationalism, but which could only be meaningfully grounded in a feeling regard for the nation's traditional values, principles and institutions.

It will already be evident that Wordsworth and Coleridge ultimately defined nationalism as a moral force. Nationalism, as a collective feeling for the land, its interdependent social structure and its traditional body politic, seemed to be a natural force for virtue. True nationalism was always seen, by them, both as the product and the promoter of man's Christian values and principles. The experience of the Napoleonic wars seemed to prove this point conclusively, since it was the nations imbued with a true nationalist spirit (i.e., Britain, Spain and Portugal) which had remained steadfast in their struggle against the evil of France. Nationalism, as they defined the term, was an ineluctable instrument of the Divine Will.

Wordsworth and Coleridge both believed the moral nature of nationalism to be analogous to the moral condition of man himself. Wordsworth linked his own need for moral liberty, freedom of mind and body, to civil and national liberties. What was morally good and necessary for the individual must be so for the nation as a whole. Individual moral standards served as a guide for national ones and, if followed, produced a more moral state. In The Convention of Cintra he praised the individual sense of moral responsibility which the Spanish displayed to each other and argued that this served as a model for national practice as well:

> I apply these rules, taken from the intercourse between individuals, to the conduct of large bodies of men, or of nations towards each other, because they are nothing but aggregates of individuals; and because the maxims of all just law, and the measures of all sane practice, are only an enlarged or modified application of those dispositions of love and those principles of reason, by which the welfare of individuals in their connection with each other, is promoted.[37]

Nationalism, in this sense, could be the most exalted expression of man's individual mo r ality.

Coleridge also believed that the individual self and the nation were indissolubly related: the latter, a macrocosm of the former. He argued that nationalism derived its moral essence from personal morality, but also that people gained part of their ethical sense from participation in national life. The moral spirit of individuals merged to form the moral consensus of the nation, but, in turn, man's identity was also shaped by that consensus. There was, therefore, a reciprocal moral process between nation and citizen. By reflecting the moral influences of the nation state, man was partly reflecting himself. Coleridge demonstrated this principle by using a favourite metaphor of the self-replenishing fountain:

> For this is the only permanent fountain of national grandeur, though by a wonderful circuit, by a sublime mystery of multifold reaction, the full stream filtrates down through numberless channels, and by continued attraction, returns to feed and enrich the fountain.[38]

Coleridge recognised, however, that this close relationship between private and national morality was not tenable in every circumstance. Although, ideally, the same moral spirit should always prevail, events sometimes demanded that national reaction be moral in purpose, but not so moral in present practice. Coleridge explores this in his section of The Friend (1809-10), "On the Law of Nations":

> But in all Morality, though the principle, which is the abiding spirit of the Law, remains perpetual and unaltered, even as that supreme Reason in whom and from whom it has its' being, yet the Letter of the Law, that is the application of it to particular instances and the mode of realizing it in actual practice, must be modified by the existing circumstances.[39]

Although national behaviour should try to follow the dictates of private morality, sometimes national circumstances demanded that the moral code

be set aside, temporarily, in order to secure the future moral health of the nation. Sometimes the absolute letter of the law had to be abandoned to maintain its spirit.

Coleridge argued that nations had to follow this course more often than individuals. Individual morality was synonymous with national morality only in essence or spirit. Whereas individuals had a duty not only to themselves, but also to the state, the nation's highest responsibility was to its own self-preservation. In extreme cases of danger, therefore, nations might be forced into actions, which seemed contrary to the moral code, but which ultimately preserved themselves and their moral force for futurity. Coleridge emphasised, however, that this behaviour was only justified in cases of dire necessity. In general, nations should follow the dictates of personal morality so far as was possible. He concluded that,

> personal and national morality, ever one and the same, dictate the same measures under the same circumstances; and different measures only so far as the circumstances are different.[40]

Thus, Wordsworth and Coleridge argued that nationalism was a moral force which was derived from man's personal moral code, but was also its greatest defender. Endeavours, undertaken in a true nationalist spirit, were necessarily moral in essence and purpose. Similarly, institutions and laws which were framed in this spirit, possessed a moral animus. England's ancient constitution had evolved out of this nationalist spirit and, as we have seen, Wordsworth and Coleridge believed that the struggle against Napoleon had revived this spirit and imbued its every action with moral purpose. The two writers did, however, consider the potentially evil effects of nationalism. They addressed themselves to the problem that nationalism might also create conflict between countries that could be military, economic or political.

Coleridge argued that true nationalism, in the sense already defined, tended to promote industry, enterprise and healthy commercial competition. In the process, the bonds between nations strengthened, rather than weakened, as their economies grew and prospered in mutual dependence.[41] Although Coleridge had found little commendable in commerce when he delivered his 1795 Bristol Lectures,[42] by 1800, he believed that a healthy commercial system was an indication of a prosperous, happy nation, even if complete happiness had to be built on more than just

economic success:

> commerce and commercial prosperity is an accompaniment and an accessory of a real and national prosperity, but by no means the essence and self-sufficient constituent of it.[43]

A successful commercial system helped the nation prosper and this, in turn, led to further economic growth. Thus, as one nation traded with another, the prosperity of each increased and contributed to the happiness of the whole. Coleridge warned, however, that the pursuit of commercial prosperity could only be the means to an end, which was the welfare of the people.[44] If it were pursued as an end in itself then it would lead to conflict within, and between, nations. The economy, and the country as a whole, had to be run for the good of all the people, the entire nation. Only if this national interest were pursued, would the commercial system truly prosper. If, however, commerce was managed purely for the profit and aggrandisement of a few traders and businessmen then it would provoke national conflicts and greed. Eventually such materialism would be self-destructive. A true nationalist spirit was always moral in character and so when trade was pursued in this spirit, it benef i ted the whole nation and increased the economic bonds between all nations. As we shall see, Coleridge feared that the commercial spirit, which was growing fast in post-war Britain, would indeed threaten to overwhelm the finer, moral spirit of nationalism that had prevailed before 1815.[45]

Wordsworth also believed that nationalism, in its true moral aspect, was a force for harmony, both economic and diplomatic. Once independence and liberty had been achieved by each nation, there would be a real opportunity for international accord. As we have argued, Wordsworth believed that a true nationalist spirit was defined by a respect for the national integrity of other countries, and it was only imperialism which led nations into ambitious and aggressive conduct. When a country, such as Britain, went to war it was only to defend its own national identity, or that of other countries, against imperialist attack and oppression. True nationalism did not provoke war, but was a mighty guardian of moral principle. Indeed, Wordsworth argued that nationalist feelings often had a pacific, curative effect. He himself had increasingly found comfort in nationalist sentiment in his period of disillusionment around the turn of the century. He had turned for

consolation, and peace of mind, to this 'sheltering England'.[46]

Coleridge also believed that nationalism could heal internal divisions and bind everyone in unity. He could envisage a world of brotherly nations where each country, surrounded by other free nations, had a greater opportunity to prosper and stay at peace. Through the agency of international trade, laws and social intercourse, nations were being drawn together into one system. Since each nation was increasingly dependent on others, a pursuit of the national interest, also involved a consideration of the interests of other nations. Thus, in pursuing its own distinct character, a nation also became more aware of 'the needful stimulation and general influences of Intercommunity'.[47] True nationalism was the hand-maiden of peaceful co-existence and interdependence. Coleridge understood, however, that this pacific state was rarely achieved in practice. Even if the bonds between nations were becoming more palpable, there were always many ambitious men, such as Napoleon, who would use their nations to create conflict and oppression. Although true moral nationalism had the potential to raise people up to a more virtuous, pacific plane of thought, it was often weak in resisting human ambition. Like Wordsworth, however, Coleridge argued that true nationalism could never provoke war, though it might impel the people to defend their nation in a moral cause, or help others maintain their national identity and freedom. If the true moral spirit of nationalism prevailed across Europe, such measures would be unnecessary and each would live in peaceful, respectful co-existence:

> Rivalry between two nations conduces to the Independence of both, calls forth or fosters all the virtues, by which national security is maintained.[48]

The Napoleonic wars had acted as a prism refracting the popular, universal patriotism of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's youth, into a much more conservative type of nationalism. This new definition involved not just a love of the land and the people, but also a reasoned regard for the nation's evolving traditions, institutions and customs, its interdependent social structure and its propertied constitution. It was also a fundamentally moral force and was an expression of the collective will of the people - not in any democratic sense - but as the will of the people, being part of a national society, which was traditionally conceived, stratified, yet also organically linked. They believed that

this true form of nationalism existed all to rarely in history and far less often in the oppressed countries of war-torn Europe. Indeed, Wordsworth and Coleridge concluded that it really only existed, in its complete state, in England itself. Their definition of nationalism increasingly became a mere description of the species of nationalism, which they believed England had displayed in the wars. Instead of England approximating to their theory of the ideal nation state, the theory itself was made to fit their analysis of the existing state of England's social, political and economic structure. By 1815, therefore, they had reached the conclusion that English nationalism was true nationalism, and the English state was the ideal state. Although each country had to develop its own brand of nationalism, consistent with the principles which they had explored, and attuned to the particularities of its individual society and culture, England had accomplished this to the subtlest degree. English nationalism was seen as the archetype for all other nations.

Coleridge expounded this theory in its most absolute form in The Friend (1818). There, he reviewed the past decades of war and gave a final estimate of national worth. England was set at the top of a type of league table of European nations. Although he admired the spirit of the Spanish, Portugese and Tyrolese, he did not consider them to be first-rank powers and, therefore, his long comparative study mostly concerns England, France and Germany. He ascribed to each great nation a set of defining characteristics and, on nearly every count, the English were judged superior. One example, 'in respect of intellectual character',[49] will indicate the tenor of the whole:

GERMANY	ENGLAND	FRANCE
Genius,	Genius,	Cleverness,
Talent,	Sense,	Talent,
Fancy.	Humour.	Wit.[50]

In this characteristic, as in so many of the others he discusses,[51] the French emerge as the most superficial of the three nations. Their intellectual qualities are dazzling, even beguiling, but they do not prossess the profundity, reliability and liberality of the English. Even the more elitist Germans, whom Coleridge admired as second only to the English, do not possess the latter's inestimable 'sense', a quality which was held in common by all the English, in comparison with the Germans' 'talent' which could only apply to the few. Their character did not display the quality of sound 'bottom' which was fundamental to

the English national spirit.

Wordsworth was not as fastidious in his approach to the hierarchy of nations. Although he regarded England as an example to all, he adopted a more liberal stance, giving due weight to the Spanish, Portuguese and Tyrolese when he praised them in The Convention of Cintra (1809). This difference between the two writers is also reflected in their attitude to national distinctions within Britain itself. Coleridge argued that the archetypal English nationalism was not only superior to other European forms, but also to Scottish and Irish forms. Wordsworth's view was not so absolute. Although Wordsworth wrote mostly about the 'English' nation, he most often used the term as a synonym for 'British', when describing the war effort in Europe.[52] When he wrote of England as a separate entity, it was usually in an emotional context, when the distinct English countryside moved him to patriotic feelings. England, then, was the dearest part of the entire nation and it helped him, by association, to love it all.

Wordsworth was, however, capable of understanding the similar attachment that the Scottish landscape could inspire in the Scots. Indeed, he, himself, was often moved by it. Wordsworth knew Scotland well and made extensive tours there in 1803 and 1814, forming a close friendship with Sir Walter Scott. He loved its countryside and people, and he revered national heroes such as Rob Roy, Bonnie Dundee and Robert Burns:

> A famous man is Robin Hood,
> The English ballad-singer's joy!
> And Scotland has a thief as good,
> An outlaw of as daring mood;
> She has her brave Rob Roy!
> Then clear the weeds from off his Grave,
> And let us chant a passing stave,
> In honour of that Hero brave![53]

So, although Wordsworth was naturally drawn to his own land of England, he could still appreciate that Scottish national ideas, feelings and spirit were all equally valid and analogous to England's. The same true and ancient spirit of nationalism resided there as it did too in Spain and Portugal.

Coleridge, however, had little regard for the Scots or the Irish. He had accompanied William and Dorothy Wordsworth on their tour of

Scotland in 1803, but the experience, and the weather, had not been congenial. Coleridge also suffered much criticism from the Edinburgh Review and its bitter attacks, its Whiggishness and its Scottishness, all became associated in his mind. Scottish writers, generally, figured large in his pantheon of the wrong-minded and unprincipled. He was a consistent opponent of the philosophy of David Hume and the political economics of Adam Smith, and he attacked the histories of William Robertson and the poetry of Walter Scott.[54] He summed up his view of the Scots, in a letter of 1816, when he stated, 'The Scotch appear to me dull Frenchmen and superficial Germans. - They have no Inside'.[55] This is an even more damning judgement when one remembers how he characterised these other nations! The Irish fared no better, in his opinion:

> we are reluctantly compelled to place the main population of the Sister Island close by, of the co-partner in the same Empire, and nominally, at least, sharing the same Laws and Constitution, in the last and lowest rank of the civilised world.[56]

Coleridge admitted that the English had often failed to govern Ireland well in the past; nevertheless, the Irish themselves had been mainly responsible for this, because they had placed obstacles in the path of effective government: especially through their continued adherence to a 'foreign' power, the Church of Rome, which was alien to the ancient English constitution and its true established Church.

Thus, for Coleridge, England possessed true nationalism at its most moral, principled and refined. Irish and Scottish nationalist feelings were pale or meaningless by comparison. Wordsworth also revered English nationalism and was naturally most attracted by it. He did not regard it in quite such a unique way as Coleridge, but he still believed that it was a particularly fine example of a national spirit, perfectly attuned to people, land, history and circumstance. For both writers, the nationalist feelings, which the Napoleonic War had aroused, implied and entailed a love for the existing political, social and economic structure of Britain as it had traditionally evolved since the seventeenth century. Nationalism was thus to be the first, most emotional, basis for Wordsworth's and Coleridge's defence of the existing constitution. It was also to be a moral basis for its defence since they regarded the fundamental characteristic of

true nationalism to be its moral spirit. Coleridge expressed their joint feelings most succinctly in the following passage from a Courier article of 1811. English nationalism involved an admiration for all aspects of the traditional, interdependent constitution, and was, itself, a force for national prosperity and Christian virtue. Nationalism bound all in the one consensus, which achieved its practical expression in the laws, institutions and customs of the constitutional body politic:

> The one Country [i.e. England] has for a century and a half continued to be of all the nations of Christendom, the happiest, most prosperous, and rapidly progressive, in the fitness and steady execution of its laws, in the diffusion of knowledge and rational morality, in the vital action and re-action of its manufacturers, its agriculture, and its commerce on each other, in the subservience of all three to its naval supremacy, and of its naval supremacy and national grandeur to their interests in return, in the number, respectability, and influence of its middle class, and in the interdependence of all classes, and of all modes of property on each other; in short, in all the elements of a civilised free State, in all things that at once perfect the organisation and secure the growth and vigour of the Body Politic.[57]

(b) Tradition

Wordsworth and Coleridge did not just defend the existing constitution on nationalist principles; they also appealed to tradition. The nation itself was an historically defined state, being, in part, a summation of all the country's past customs, institutions, and social and political arrangements. The constitution was, therefore, a product of the nation's fine traditions. It had withstood the test of time and could be defended on those grounds. This appeal to the past was to assume great importance for Wordsworth and Coleridge after 1802, especially since their conservative philosophy did not have a monopoly of the moral argument. More moderate reformers were quite capable of appealing to God's Law to justify a more democratic system of government, based on the premise that God had created man with certain inalienable rights. Wordsworth and Coleridge were to respond that God's Will was only to be found evident, in practical form, in those traditional customs, reciprocal duties and institutions which were time-honoured and had served the nation well.

Interest in the past, particularly in classical or medieval times, was an important element in the work of most Romantic writers, from Robert Southey and Walter Scott, to the second generation of Romantics, such as Lord Byron, P.B. Shelley and John Keats. This was not merely an antiquarian interest. The appeal to the past could be used either in a radical fashion to justify reforms, which would return the nation to some previous golden age, or it could be used in a conservative defence of the existing nation state as a product of tradition. After 1802, Wordsworth and Coleridge were to employ their appeal to tradition mostly in the latter sense, and were much influenced by the writing of Burke.[58]

Burke argued that constitutions developed gradually, without human contrivance or systematic design. They were the product of history and experience, not the deliberate result of human will or reason. The British constitution was prescriptive and did not rest on an original contract, but on the fact that it had existed for time immemorial. It had withstood the test of time and had for centuries satisfied the needs and wants of society. The British constitution had proved itself by the wisdom of human experience, which was a higher, more dependable test than that of human reason. Thus, any changes made in the constitution could only be minor adjustments in the evolutionary fabric, to take account of altered circumstances. Change could only be contemplated as a means of conserving the true principles of the past as they related to the present. To attempt innovatory change, as the radicals wished, would have destroyed the whole structure of society and government.[59] Prescription, alone, ensured political and social stability. The nation state was the subject of this historical process and, through its evolutionary constitution, it maintained, for futurity, all the time-honoured principles and forms of its national past.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the term 'tradition' was often used within the concept of an oral culture. This conception is certainly evident in the work of Wordsworth, where there is often a distinct preference for oral culture as opposed to over-intellectural, bookish culture.[60] Wordsworth's poetry is often composed of tales told, in narrative form, by country folk. This is apparent in Lyrical Ballads poems, such as Michael, but is even more

obvious in works written after 1802; in The Prelude (1805), the 1804 version of The Ruined Cottage and in The Excursion (1814), where most of the poem is constructed from the conversation of the main protagonists. Oral culture linked one generation with the next, and ensured the transmission of the truths of each era, till all became linked in one historical continuum. The power of these tales lay in their timeless moral truth rather than their historical veracity.[61] In Book XII of The Prelude, Wordsworth argued that one of the highest means of transmitting these traditions from one generation to the next was through the medium of poetry. Poets could use these tales as the stuff of art which would transcend the centuries. He believed that poets, like prophets, throughout the ages, communicated and were connected with each other 'in a mighty scheme of truth'[62] and that the poet,

> hath stood
> By Nature's side among the men of old,
> And so shall stand for ever.[63]

Just as in a 'spot of time' one communicated with Nature, and was also linked to one's own past, so the poet was able to transmute his experience of the traditions of the past into an art form and, in this way, he was able to act like Nature itself, recalling enduring truths to his reader's attention.[64]

Wordsworth argued that the long traditions, associated with a particular place, had a power to impinge on the senses and impress the recipient with the power of the past. While crossing Salisbury Plain, images of ancient Britons, and the traditional roots of the nation, were recalled to his mind:

> While through those vestiges of ancient times
> I ranged, and by the solitude o'ercome,
> I had a reverie and saw the past.[65]

He then envisaged an ancient ceremony, which celebrated 'the living and the dead'.[66] In his Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793) he had attacked the Burkean notion of the living being linked, or 'shackled', to the dead.[67] By 1805, he found himself creatively inspired by exactly this same idea, experienced in natural surroundings, that also had a specific national connotation. Wordsworth now believed that the real heart of the nation was to be discovered in these traditions, which were still relevant and inspirational, and which linked past and

present in one ever-present whole. This was not just his old regard for more universal habits, but an admiration for specifically national traditions.

These traditions were most alive in country areas where oral tradition was still strong, and where life progressed, over the centuries, as one continuum. In his Essay on Epitaphs, printed in Coleridge's The Friend (1810), the country parish Church stands as a symbol of this national unity; a focus for the nation's finest, Christian principles and traditions:

> Hence a Parish Church, in the stillness of the Country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead; a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both.[68]

Even the churches in the towns did not have this same ancient link with the traditions of the national past. Only in the countryside, where there had been continuous settlement over centuries, and where oral culture was still alive, were these vital links, between past and present, sustained. These traditions had a moral truth and a value which were ever-present and, if the generational bonds were renounced, then the whole fabric of society would be irreparably ruptured.

The constitution, which was necessarily a political expression of that society, could not be a written contract, or merely be dictated by the power of reason, but was a product of the time-honoured national traditions which linked the living and the dead. Wordsworth described the right of liberty, which the constitution guaranteed as 'healthy, matured, time-honoured liberty - this is the growth and peculiar boast of Britain'.[69] Britain's constitutional rights and duties had existed from time immemorial. Their lengthy pedigree made them stronger and stabler than the more ephemeral, abstract rights which radicals espoused. Wordsworth believed that Britain had recovered her sense of these traditional links with the past, by participation in the Napoleonic wars. Historically, the British were

> a people which, by the help of the surrounding ocean and its own virtues, had preserved to itself through ages its liberty, pure and inviolated by a foreign invader.[70]

Wordsworth argued that this traditional regard for moral principles had sometimes been weak, as the signing of the Treaty of Amiens had

proved, but that Britain's traditional beliefs had been revived by helping the Spanish and Portugese to recover their ancient constitutional rights. Britain could, once more, face her own past and reforge the generational links between past and present. Participating in the Peninsular campaign,

> we looked backward upon the records of the human race with pride, and, instead of being afraid, we delighted to look forward into futurity.[71]

Only when the traditional fabric of national life had been repaired in this way could Britain make progress, secure in her regard for time-honoured practices and principles.

Wordsworth argued that the best way of ensuring that a nation followed its traditional principles was by grounding its constitution in hereditary property-owning. The traditional possession of property, by British landowning families, had secured the continuance of time-honoured values and institutions from one generation to the next. Property was a practical reminder and living transmitter of traditional, national moral values. By 1818, Wordsworth was able to praise his old enemies, the Lowthers, as just such a bulwark of tradition and the constitution:

> the political influence of the family of Lowther in Westmorland, is the natural and reasonable consequence of a long-continued possession of large property - furnishing, with the judicious Nobleman at its head, an obvious support, defence, and instrument, for the intelligent patriotism of the Country.[72]

Their right to govern and defend the country was, like their right to their property, prescriptive. Their property was a physical manifestation of national tradition. Like Nature itself, from which it was derived, property was an ever-present force which contained within it, symbolically, the finest traditions of the country. These were passed on to each new generation of owners; and so those landowners were the custodians of the nation. A sound legislator needed to have a high regard for these traditions and for pragmatism, as well as a trust in God whose moral laws radiated through all those customs which had stood the test of time. The requisites of a governor were:

> an humble reliance on the wisdom of our Forefathers, and a sedate yielding to the pressure of existing things; or carry the thoughts still higher, to religious trust

> in a superintending Providence, by whose permission laws are ordered and customs established, for other purposes than to be perpetually found fault with.[73]

Coleridge, perhaps the best-read writer of his generation, had a wide knowledge of history. The traditions of the past were to play an increasingly important role in his defence of the constitution. The past had a living relevance for Coleridge: 'the history of the past is the birth-right of every present generation'.[74] It was a storehouse of true principles which had stood the test of time and was still pertinent to present-day society. The past was not a burden on the living, as the radicals had contended, but was vital to the continuance of life. Coleridge still acknowledged that people did not always draw the correct lessons from studying a mere historical record of events or even from experience, which often involved bitter, false memories.[75] He did believe, however, that traditions, which had survived the test of time, provided a source of moral truth and enlightenment. These traditions sprang from moments in a nation's past, when its moral spirit and purpose were most engaged and the nation was morally illuminated: 'From the great æras of national illumination we date the commencement of our main national advantages'.[76] A sense of this national tradition inspired patriotism and ennobled man's character, preparing him, and the nation at large, for the task of attempting great deeds: 'wherever this ennobling privilege is inherited, every citizen has a power within him, of which he himself in ordinary times is not aware'.[77] National traditions were a 'united experience',[78] which bound the nation together and gave it a sense of its own distinct identity and also invested it with moral purpose.

Coleridge believed that society could not be divorced from its traditions without it being destroyed, morally and politically. He remarked how this had happened in Napoleon's despotic empire:

> [There had been] the devastation effected in the moral world, by the violent removal of old customs, familiar sympathies, willing reverences, and habits of subordination almost naturalised into instinct.[79]

Just as reputation was an indicator of a man's worth, so was adherence to tradition an indicator of a nation's values.[80] These traditions were part of man's natural state and the constitution had to be derived from them. Coleridge, like Wordsworth, believed that one of his most important

tasks was to remind his readers of these traditional values, and so play his part in maintaining the moral and historical unity of the nation. The object of his journal, The Friend (1809-10), was to set out these traditional principles upon which all society and government had to rest:

> to uphold those Truths and those Merits, which are founded in the nobler and permanent Parts of our Nature, against the Caprices of Fashion.[81]

Coleridge also subscribed to Burke's idea of a community between the living and the dead: a continuum between present and past. Writing in the 1818 edition of The Friend, Coleridge argued that, at some points in her history since 1688, Britain had neglected her traditional values and had transgressed the links between the generations. He wrote as 'a lover of Old England'[82] - i.e., a lover of those traditional principles of government, which he believed the Revolutionary Settlement had secured. He argued that these time-honoured values had come under attack from radicals in the 1790s, and then again in the post-war era, and were in danger of being lost:

> the true historical feeling, the feeling of being an historical people, generation linked to generation by ancestral reputation, by tradition, by heraldry - this noble feeling, I say, openly stormed or perilously undermined.[83]

The nation, ever-changing in its constituent parts, was still a distinct organism held together by those vital generational bonds, which the hereditary landed classes did so much to preserve. Shared national traditions not only underpinned all good government, but also gave living expression to the idea of the nation itself.

Coleridge's organic view of national life led him to believe that government should not merely appeal to tradition, but that past and present had to live, indissolubly, as a unity. There had to be a wedding between past and present, in the same way as a symphonic development introduced new themes while also recalling melodies, heard earlier in the work. These older melodies were necessarily changed by their new context, but their essence remained and took on a new life:

> the musician has reached the summit of his art, when having thus modified the Present by the Past, he at the same time weds the Past in the Present to some prepared and corresponsive Future.[84]

In political terms, this meant that Coleridge was readier than Burke or Wordsworth to embrace a more dynamic conception of the constitution - as will be explored in the following chapter. Coleridge did not appeal to tradition per se, but to a constant re-interpretation of traditions within the present. The essence of tradition was constant, but its practical realisation was ever-changing. If there was not this continual re-interpretation of traditions in the present, they would cease to live and be meaningful in the future. Constitutional arrangements had to be able to reflect this necessity for constant change, so that past, present and future could grow as one organic process.

Coleridge believed that the truths at the heart of all traditions were essentially Christian. When Coleridge appealed to time-honoured values, he reached out beyond tradition, in the national or political sense, to the moral laws of God, which attained their purest expression in the Bible. Traditions, which had survived the generations, had succeeded in translating Christian values into practice. The Bible itself was a record of traditions and was the highest, most dependable source of truth. The traditional moral values expressed in the Bible were, therefore, the highest source of appeal and national traditions were merely derived from these Christian truths. Ultimately the constitution had to be based on these. Coleridge explicated these ideas in The Statesman's Manual (1816), the very title of which refers to the Bible as the ultimate source of those truths, which would always stand the test of time and which were necessary for the guidance of all politicians and governments. Searching for an antidote to post-war discontent and the destructive craving for new things, Coleridge recommended that government should be more firmly rooted in the traditional principles of the Bible:

> that antidote and these means must be sought for in the coll a tion of the present with the past, in the habit of thoughtfully assimilating the events of our own age to those of the time before us. If this be a moral advantage derivable from history in general, rendering its study therefore a moral duty for such as possess the opportunities of books, leisure and education, it would be inconsistent even with the name of believers not to recur with pre-eminent interest to events and revolutions, the records of which are as much distinguished from all other history by their especial claims to divine authority, as the facts themselves were from all other facts by especial manifestation of divine interference. 'Whatsoever things', saith Saint Paul (Romans XV, 4) 'were written

> aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.'[85]

The Bible, as a source of traditions directly inspired and imbued with God's Word, was, therefore, Coleridge's highest source of appeal. Old national traditions contained these Biblical truths and had adapted them to the distinct character of the nation, but they were secondary to the traditions in the Bible itself. Moreover, since God's Word was perpetual and ever-present, the traditions of the Bible were naturally suited to live within the organic process of life and be forever relevant. The constitution merely had to give them practical expression.

(c) Pragmatism

The appeal to the past would mean little if old traditions were no longer relevant to present-day society; the constitution also had to be based on pragmatic considerations. The course of the French Republic had shown the folly of trying to impose a new set of political values on an unprepared people, without reckoning the practical problems. After 1802, Wordsworth and Coleridge became fond of contrasting the practical failure of this republican experiment with the success of the British political system which was perfectly attuned to the social structure and needs of the nation. The existing national constitution was to be defended not only because it had stood the test of time, but also because it continued to serve the nation well. It was the most pragmatic system that Britain could expect to enjoy.

Wordsworth and Coleridge drew their ideas on pragmatism from a long tradition of British empirical philosophy, but the writer they most admired was Burke. Edmund Burke had been a critic of abstract philosophy, not because he was against theory per se, but because he distrusted its elevation to the status of necessity.[86] His own philosophy was partly derived from his work as a practising politician, just as much of Coleridge's thought originated from his work as a journalist. Burke believed that political systems should be grounded in man as a social animal, rather than in some putative state of nature. Since man's social existence rarely ran on purely rational or theoretical lines, so the nation's constitution had to be sensible of this; it could not be based on abstract theory, but, instead, it had to be pragmatic. The British constitution had long served the nation well

and had successfully preserved the nation's liberties and had ensured prosperity.[87] The key interests of the nation were represented in government and even the more irrational aspects of the system (which the radicals termed 'corruption') were to be tolerated because they all contributed to the success of the whole.[88] Thus, the constitution could be justified on pragmatic grounds and only minor, conservatory changes need ever be envisioned.

In Book XII of The Prelude, Wordsworth charted how his disillusionment with abstract philosophy had begun in 1796. He had begun to find comfort in traditional society and in values which had not only stood the test of time, but were still practical and had a present meaning and relevance:

> my trust
> Was firmer in the feelings which had stood
> The test of such a trial, clearer far
> My sense of what was excellent and right,
> The promise of the present time retired
> Into its true proportion; sanguine schemes,
> Ambitious virtues, pleased me less; I sought
> For good in the familiar face of life,
> And built thereon my hopes of good to come.[89]

Wordsworth increasingly thereafter justified political ideas, laws and institutions not just because they were traditional, rational or moral, but because they were also pragmatic. Principles only achieved life and meaning by being adapted to social circumstance; they did not follow abstract or rational patterns. In The Excursion (1814), the Wanderer states:

> And in your judgement, Sir! the mind's repose
> On evidence is not to be ensured
> By act of naked reason. Moral truth
> Is no mechanic structure, built by rule;
> And which, once built, retains a steadfast shape
> And undisturbed proportions; but a thing
> Subject, you deem, to vital accidents.[90]

Until 1802 Wordsworth had wished to implement republican principles by adapting them, more pragmatically, to existing social conditions, but, during the Napoleonic War s, Wordsworth admired only those principles which had evolved from the national past and were already pragmatically fitted to contemporary society. Pragmatism was now seen as grounds for justifying existing constitutional principles, rather than a means of realising republican ideals. In his Westmorland Address (1818),

Wordsworth argued that 'Government is essentially a matter of expediency'[91] and that all political action and belief had to be based on 'conscience regulated by expediency'.[92] On these grounds he was to support the Lowther candidates wholeheartedly in the election, not only because of their traditional ties with the area, but also because they had served the community well on a practical level.[93] Anything which worked well empirically had earned its place in politics and society, and should be retained. The constitution, which the Lowthers had always defended, was the outstanding example of this principle in action, for the constitution consisted of the steady accretion of beliefs, laws and institutions which had not only survived the test of time, but also continued to prove themselves pragmatic and true.

Wordsworth also followed Burke in arguing that since the British constitution served the nation well, radical change should be avoided in case the whole system was damaged. Any change which was to be contemplated, had to be piecemeal and conservative, not radical and innovative. Laws were to be left unchanged, unless they had positively proved themselves to be harmful: 'Better it is that laws should remain till long trial has proved them an incumbr ance, than that they should be too hastily changed'.[94] The test of pragmatism and experience showed which parts of the constitution required modification. In general, however, even those laws which had outlived their usefulness were to be accorded respect and admiration; they could be allowed to wither away gradually, in dignity, without any need for surgical operation.[95] To do otherwise might imperil the whole system, for even a seemingly outmoded law might still have a practical function that was not immediately obvious. Since the constitution served the nation so well, each law and part of that system, had a right to remain unchanged, unless it proved to be positively obstructive. Each had a pragmatic role to play in the success of the whole.

The appeal to pragmatism features even more prominently in the political writing of Coleridge after 1802. In accord with Wordsworth, Coleridge regarded the British constitution defensible, not only because it was based on traditional moral values, but because it had proved to be pragmatic. Coleridge believed that principles only became meaningful and took on life, when they were translated into

practice. Any system based on abstract theory was necessarily meaningless to man and unrealisable. A purely rationalist philosophy, he argued, appealed to shallow, lazy minds because it offered a simple set of abstract ideas and did not engage the mind with the more complex and various practicalities of real life. Rationalist philosophy ignored all the traditional values and pragmatic considerations which were features of everyday life and which had to be taken into account by constitutional systems if they were to work effectively:

> By this system the observation of Times, Places, relative Bearings, History, national Customs and Character, is rendered superfluous: all, in short, which according to the common notion makes the attainment of legislative Prudence a work of difficulty and long-continued effort, even for the acutest and most comprehensive minds.[96]

Coleridge believed that this had been one of the chief flaws in Rousseau's rationalist philosophy - he had underestimated the need to consider the practical realities of existing society, when seeking to apply his theory. His philosophy lacked a pragmatic impulse.[97]

Although Coleridge attacked speculative philosophies founded on pure reeason, he did believe that pragmatism should always be rooted in reason. He advocated, 'an enforcement of the absolute necessity of principles grounded in reason as the basis or rather as the living root of all genuine expedience.'[98] Man's reason was a gift from heaven and should inform all human action. God had not bestowed man with individual rational rights, but he had created man with a rational faculty which could only find expression through engagement with the practical circumstances of life. Thus, when reason formed the root of expedient behaviour, the resulting action would be moral, and never merely calculating or selfish.[99] Conversely, man's reason could only live and attain meaning, if it found a pragmatic means of expression. Coleridge summed up the interdependent roles of reason and pragmatism in The Friend (1809):

> That Reason should be our Guide and Governor is an undeniable Truth, and all our notion of Right and Wrong is built thereon: for the whole moral Nature of Man originated and subsists in his Reason. From Reason alone can we derive the Principles which our Understandings are to apply, the Ideal to which by means of our Understandings we should endeavour to

> approximate. This however gives no proof, that Reason alone ought to govern and direct human beings, either as Individuals or as States. It ought not to do this, because it cannot. The Laws of Reason are unable to satisfy the first conditions of Human Society ... the proof is wanting, that the first and most general applications and exertions of the power of Man can be definitely regulated by Reason unaided by the positive and conventional Laws in the formation of which the Understanding must be our Guide, and which become just because they happen to be expedient.[100]

All laws had to be grounded on rational principles, but they also had to work pragmatically within the distinct experience and circumstances of the nation state.[101] This was the origin of all just, moral government.

Coleridge also only advocated constitutional change if it was pragmatic, and conserved the true principles and aims of government. he identified three justifications for modifications in the political system:

> first, practicable; secondly, suited to the existing circumstances; and lastly, necessary or at least requisite, and such as will enable the Government to accomplish more perfectly the ends for which it was installed. These are the three indispensable Conditions of all prudent change.[102]

Coleridge believed that the text of expedience was one of the most important ways of assessing the worth of a constitutional system.[103] If the constitution worked well in practical terms, preserving the nation's liberties and promoting moral government, then it had a right to remain. The British constitution had proved itself in this way for more than a century, and Coleridge argued that there was small need for any immediate changes. Coleridge argued that even moderate reformers, such as Cartwright and Price, who had advocated change by appealing back to traditional laws and first privileges, which they believed had been neglected, still had to prove that these neglected laws would be expedient in present circumstances:

> It is evident, therefore, that the expediency of the regulations prescribed by them and their suitableness to the existing circumstances of the Kingdom, must first be proved.[104]

Change could not be justified by an appeal to tradition alone; the changes had to be expedient. Coleridge further believed that it was unlikely that if one did appeal to ancient statutes that they would be

suited to 19th century Britain.[105] Old laws, wrested from their original social and legal context, would have little pragmatic force. Change on such inexpedient grounds was inadvisable.

This did not mean, however, that Coleridge was against constitutional change; indeed, like Burke, he accepted that there had to be continual change and growth, but of an organic, not an innovatory nature, in order to ensure that the constitution still functioned in a pragmatic fashion. Society and constitution were living parts of one great organic unity which was constantly growing and changing. Each interdependent part had to grow in harmony with all the others and achieve meaning through them: 'This must be the case with all organised truths; the component parts derive their significance from the idea of the whole.'[106] If change ceased, the whole national organism would die. Thus, although the present constitution had proved itself pragmatic, there had to be constant vigilance to maintain its expedience in an ever-changing world. Coleridge argued that nations, and their constitutions, had to be much more finely attuned to these changing circumstances than individuals. The factors influencing an individual were relatively limited and often the same circumstances were encountered time and again; but national life was much more various and changeable. Thus, the national constitution could not be fixed, but had to be sensitively tuned to society's evolution in order to remain pragmatic.[107] As will be seen in the following chapter, Coleridge's case for constant pragmatic change was to lead him to adopt a more dynamic view of a totally organic constitution than Wordsworth, or even Burke. Wordsworth only admitted the possibility of change in times of absolute necessity. Coleridge's view of society and the constitution was not so static.

It should be remembered, however, that Coleridge was firmly opposed to innovatory change. Changes in the constitution were only to be entertained when their aim was to conserve its fundamental principles, or spirit, in new circumstances.[108] Change was necessary to ensure that the original spirit of the constitution remained alive and that the political system remained pragmatic at all times: 'The only fixed part of the Law of Nations is the spirit; the Letter of Law consists wholly in the circumstances, to which the Spirit of the Law is applied.'[109] In this way national principles and moral values were refracted through the prism of pragmatic laws, and attained life and meaning for society.

Finally, it should be noted that, although Wordsworth and Coleridge were increasingly pragmatic political thinkers, they did not argue that expedience, alone, justified any political system. A government founded on such a precept would be devoid of fixed principle or any coherent plan.[110] Such a government would be little better than one founded on abstract reason. A concern for the practical realities of contemporary society was, however, vital to ensure that the nation's traditional principles remained relevant. A pragmatic law was not necessarily a moral one, but a moral truth needed to find pragmatic expression before it could live.

Before 1802, Wordsworth and Coleridge had increasingly appealed to the natural state of man in society; thereafter they defended the existing constitution by appealing to the state of man as a part of a distinct national civil society. Thus, the constitution of Britain could be justified because it was an expression of the nation; it was a product of its fine moral traditions and it continued to be pragmatic. The constitution was a perfect reflection of the condition of national man: a creation of God, his country, the past and the present.

It is now time to consider how Wordsworth and Coleridge viewed the form of that constitution and the society from which it took its shape and spirit.

CHAPTER VI

THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

Until the end of the Revolutionary War, Wordsworth and Coleridge had advocated a more democratic, less corrupt, political system which might gradually be developed from Britain's existing society. Both writers had still regarded the ordinary people as the fundamental sector of that society, even if they were not yet fit to govern. Although Wordsworth and Coleridge accorded increasing respect to the smaller landed proprietors, they still aimed to attain a more open, democratic system, involving a much wider section of the population; the prospect of an eventual democracy was still real, particularly for Wordsworth. Neither poet had seen much value in the aristocracy or monarchy, and both had advocated the end of corrupt practices, such as the patronage and pension system. After 1802, however, the merits of Britain's existing social and political system became manifest as the republican experiment of France crumbled before the advance of despotism. Britain's constitution, and the propertied society it reflected and served, now seemed the most moral, stable and reliable that could ever be expected. Wordsworth and Coleridge embraced this system, in a moral, patriotic spirit, as an expression of national society and its traditions, and as a pragmatic system perfectly attuned to current circumstances.

In this chapter, Wordsworth's and Coleridge's revised view of Britain's long-standing social structure will be explored as well as their consequent defence of the post-1689 constitutional system and the rights which this guaranteed.

(a) National Society

Until 1802, the common people had proved to be a focus for Wordsworth's and Coleridge's political attentions. By the end of the 1790s they no longer believed that the ordinary people were ready to participate directly in government, but both writers still believed in the power of their simple moral feelings. Government always had to attend to their needs and wishes and, as they became better educated, and were relieved of the burdens of poverty, more of the lower orders might be expected to become involved in the political process. Until this had been accomplished, Wordsworth and Coleridge placed their confidence in

the class of small property-owners to govern the country wisely, morally, and in the interests of all.

During the Napoleonic Wars, Wordsworth's and Coleridge's view of society was to become more overtly Burkean. Edmund Burke had argued that no section of the population was morally perfect or infallible. The two writers became more and more aware of the flaws in the character of the ordinary people, whom they had once so admired. Although they continued to believe that man was fundamentally equal in the sight of God, they began to recognise that it was the practical distinctions between men which mattered most in civil society and which determined where political power must lie. Wordsworth and Coleridge argued that the differentiations between the social classes were inevitable and, on the whole, beneficial. Although they had no wish to see the lower orders being oppressed, or their material condition made uncomfortable, they did not wish to raise them out of their social class. They agreed, with Burke, that the happiness of all classes of men, was to be found within their individual social groupings, and that hierarchies were natural to the state of man.[1] They came to respect, most highly, the time-honoured hierarchies of British society which had served the nation so well, and whose power was reflected in the traditional form of the constitution. Thus, the whole social focus of their political philosophy was turned towards the middle and upper classes, as the natural rulers of the nation.

Wordsworth had always admired and trusted the common people more than Coleridge. After 1802, however, Wordsworth began to regard all of human-kind in a more cynical way. He recognised that man everywhere was imperfectible, capable only of aspiring to reason and morality in his finest moments, but mostly willing to attain much less.[2] He still admi red the ordinary, brotherly folk of the Lakes, but now Wordsworth could identify many of the common flaws to be found in all men, mingled with their undoubted virtues:

> born among the hills,
> Bred also there, I wanted not a scale
> To regulate my hopes; pleased with the good
> I shrink not from the evil in disgust
> Or with immoderate pain. I look for man,
> The common creature of the brotherhood,
> But little differing from the man elsewhere
> For selfishness and envy and revenge,
> Ill neighbourhood -folly that this should be -
> Flattery and double-dealing, strife and wrong.[3]

Without denying man's goodness, Wordsworth now showed a greater appreciation of the darker side of human nature, even if he still felt that this was less evident in rural areas than in the vice-ridden cities.

Wordsworth still argued that all men were fundamentally equal in the sight of God, no matter what one's outward station in life. The starkest physical reminders of this came at moments of birth and death. When a man died, all his wealth and distinctions mattered little; his state was the same as the lowliest man. This served to remind all men of mankind's fundamental equality.[4] Each man was also endowed, at birth, with a reason, an imagination, a will and a moral sense, even although these were not used equally in later life. Nevertheless, this basic equality existed, and Wordsworth still lamented that there should be such great inequalities between men in society. In The Excursion (1814) he continued to argue:

> The generous inclin ation, the just rule,
> Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts -
> No mystery is here! Here is no boon
> For high - yet not for low; for proudly graced -
> Yet not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
> To heaven as lightly from the cottage-hearth
> As from the haughtiest palace. He, whose soul
> Ponders this true equality, may walk
> The fields of earth with gratitude and hope;
> yet, in that meditation, will he find
> Motive to sadder grief, as we have found;
> Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown,
> And for the injustice grieving, that hath made
> So wide a difference between man and man.[5]

Despite Wordsworth's evident sorrow and his hope that such differentials might be diminished, he now fully accepted these distinctions as an inevitable aspect of man's social state. The equation of cottage with palace implies two analogous co-existent, yet distinct worlds. The difference between them should not be allowed to become too great, but each lifestyle is valid in itself and must be accepted as such on pragmatic terms. In this passage Wordsworth does not lament the absence of an egalitarian world in material terms, to match the fundamental equality he perceives; he only regrets the increasing absence of the ancient moral bonds of duty and responsibility, which used to bind the distinct hierarchies of society together. The hierarchies themselves were an inevitable and necessary feature of all social life.

The basic equality of men need only be recognised in moral terms of mutual responsibility and not in material terms, which would be impossible to secure.

As Wordsworth mixed in more sophisticated social circles, he lost some of the close identity of feeling he had had for the common people. In his post-1805 verse he tended to re-cycle stereo-typical characters which he had already used in earlier poems, rather than create fresh, alive people. In The Excursion (1814), in particular, the characters of the Solitary, Pastor and the Wanderer, which were all originally based on real people, assume a heavy, emblematic quality. They are mouthpieces for the author's ideas rather than living characters. Wordsworth's old feeling for the real life of country folk was disappearing. Despite this, however, he did still argue that rural life was, initially at least, healthier and more moral than that enjoyed by the richer, decadent classes.[6] He believed that since the lower orders had no privileges and had to make their own way in life, they developed a sturdier, independent spirit. The only thing which dented this spirit was their numbing, monotonous life of toil which became a struggle for mere subsistence:

> Toil, daily toil
> Secures his vigorous health and tranquil sleep,
> But time and custom overpower his soul,
> Upon the tablet the bright colours fade,
> The Image steals insensibly away,
> And leaves a meagre outline in its place,
> A ghost, a phantom.[7]

Thus, the common people who have a real moral potential become overwhelmed by their adverse economic circumstances and lose their soul. The toiling, labouring life which initially creates their sturdy, independent character, eventually wears them down and destroys its own creation. Although Wordsworth believed the effect of this life of toil could be ameliorated, it could never be altogether erased, but was an intrinsic feature of being part of a labouring class. Their only compensation was an early life of sturdy morality and the consolation of a spiritual life beyond the grave when all were again equal. In their present situation, however, Wordsworth agreed with Burke in arguing that their social status had been determined by their birth and circumstances. Although their circumstances might be improved, there would always be the need for a labouring class, and the practical

exigencies of that type of life meant that the common people would never attain the level of education or the reasoned moral spirit of the propertied classes. The middle and upper classes were unencumbered by toilsome work; they could acquire a longer, deeper education and they were linked to the national interest through their land. Thus, they had a more stable outlook on life and could exercise their moral spirit in a less passionate, more controlled, rational manner. As we shall see, these were the only classes which Wordsworth now believed were capable of governing the country in a reliable way.

Wordsworth did believe, however, that under certain circumstances, the innate moral spirit of the common people could flourish naturally, and be channelled, so that it was of worth to all - in a national struggle. When the spirit of the nation was aroused to defend its liberty and independence, the ordinary people did attain a centrality, which was normally the province of the higher classes. Wordsworth admired the ordinary people of Switzerland, Portugal and Spain in their struggle against the French. His respect and faith was based on their concerted action as a nation, rather than any intrinsic regard for them as ordinary people. The cause of national independence had released their moral spirit, but it had also channelled it into useful action. Their sense of moral purpose which often withered in ordinary labouring life was revitalised and controlled by the national spirit (itself, innately moral). Combined as a national force, the common people could be trusted to act in a just, principled fashion. The strength of the Spanish, in their current struggle, lay in the fact that their army was the nation itself, morally elevated by the cause:

> The whole Spanish nation ought to be encouraged to deem themselves an army, embodied under the authority of their country and of human nature .... The people of Spain, with arms in their hands, are already in an elevated mood, to which they have been raised by the indignant passions, and the keen sense of insupportable wrong and insult from the enemy, and its infamous instruments.[8]

In pursuing a truly moral, nationalist cause, the common people had again become the wisest section of the community, capable of instructing even the generals in their moral duty.[9] At such times of national emergency the moral feelings of all the people were aroused and given distinct purpose.[10]

In praising the ordinary people of Spain, therefore, Wordsworth was not returning to his old democratic ideals, but merely recognising that when the people were inspired as a national unity, they could be trusted. This applied to all spheres of activity. In his 1815 Essay, Supplementary to the Preface, Wordsworth argued that popular opinion was no true guide to artistic worth, but the continued approval of the people, as a historical entity, over many years, was a reliable guide to value. He said that 'the voice that issues from this Spirit, is that Vox Populi which the Deity inspires'.[11] When the people felt, thought and acted as a national unity, they became inspired by true Christian principles. Thus, feelings and opinions of the ordinary people could be trusted when they were united as a nation in times of emergency or when they were expressed in the form of a long, traditional national consensus. Neither of these conditions, however, could justify their opinions being given direct political expression in normal times. In their natural social state, the labouring classes were too ignorant, passionate and easily swayed; their innate moral spirit lacked steady purpose and control. Wordsworth's view of the common people cannot be fully assessed, however, until his revised opinion of the upper classes is examined. After 1802 Wordsworth did not so much lose his sympathy or humanitarian concern for the lower orders, as turn towards the landed classes as the most dependable, moral section of society: the natural rulers of the nation.

Even in the 1790s Coleridge had never sought to identify with the common people to the same extent as Wordsworth. He had perceived faults and virtues in every class, although he did believe, on balance, that the ordinary people were often more worthy and less selfish. After 1802 he still showed great concern for their condition, but became convinced that they were unfitted for any political role.

Coleridge's Courier articles, Letters on the Spaniards (1809-10), reveal that he admired the common people of Spain and Portugal in a similar way to Wordsworth. Indeed, the Letters were designed as a coda to Wordsworth's Convention of Cintra pamphlet. Coleridge praised the 'high-minded Spaniards',[12] fighting for their freedom and independence. Like Wordsworth, however, he argued that their moral feelings were derived from a national impulse. Although a moral spirit was inherent in all men, it had to be released and given a distinct, stable purpose.

The national struggle of the Spanish had served to moralise the common people in this way.

> It is this national character, which still at the touch of the native soil renews the strength of the fallen Antaeus, when thrown to the ground by the Herculean power of consummate discipline; it is this, which returns them to the defence of their dear country, as a wise mother her truant child, gives him food and rest, and then sends him back to his school.[13]

Only when composed as a nation could the ordinary Spanish people be entrusted to act morally and justly. Nationalism is the source of their principled sense of purpose, rather than any intrinsic moral superiority.

If, however, these exceptional national circumstances were lacking, the moral spirit of the common people would lack focus and direction, and all the inadequacies of their existing social condition would again become evident. The property of the upper classes kept them more closely attuned to the national purpose and provided a stable focus for their moral feelings. Coleridge argued that a great national cause or struggle did provide a focal point for the feelings of the common people, but under normal circumstances, without the nationalist spirit to inspire and guide them, the people often displayed moral and intellectual ignorance. Until the people were properly educated in sound moral principles, they could not be appealed to as a source of true considered judgement and feeling. Until that time, Coleridge feared that there would be 'noble Structures raised by the Wisdom of the Few, and gradually undermined by the Ignorance and Profligacy of the Many.'[14] Thus, the moral and intellectual shortcomings of the people necessarily debarred them from a role in the governmental process, even if greater education held out the prospect of future progress. Government, for the present, had to be based on the existing social structure and the qualities of each class within it; this was the only pragmatic system.

Coleridge did still argue that all people were fundamentally equal and were linked together as brothers. He praised Lord Nelson for commanding ships where the,

> Spirit of affectionate Brotherhood, which linked together the Hearts of the whole Squadron, will appear not less wonderful to us than admirable and affecting.[15]

Coleridge regarded the 'ship of state' in similar terms to Nelson's fleet. He believed that ranks and distinctions were as necessary in

society as on board ship, but the basic equality of all before God needed to be recognised. As will be argued in Section III, Coleridge no longer believed that this fundamental equality should or could be translated into material terms. Coleridge believed that the lives of ordinary people could be made more tolerable within their existing class, but argued that they should not be raised to higher expectations. The existing balance between the classes had proved to be pragmatic and had to be maintained. Each class had a distinct, vital function, and any future reforms should merely help them perform these functions more effectively. He believed that the aim of education was

> To preserve, and not to disturb or destroy, the gradations of society; to catch the falling, not to lift up the standing, from their natural and native rank.[16]

The fundamental equality of man was thus not translatable into any meaningful social or political reality, but was an abstract concept. Nevertheless, within the gradations of existing social ranks, each man was entitled to equal consideration.

When the war ended in 1815, Coleridge (and Wordsworth) believed that the moral spirit of nationalism began to disintegrate and the common people began to revert to their former immoral and ignorant behaviour. Their finer feelings were no longer inspired and channelled by the national struggle. Their energies were further dissipated by real economic hardship and they became a prey again to radical agitators. Their reversion to more vicious, volatile behaviour seemed only to confirm the two writers in their belief that the ordinary people, in natural circumstances, lacked the moral and intellectual qualities needed, if a role in politics was to be entertained. When the Regent's carriage was mobbed in 1817, Coleridge remarked that the 'sacred awe', which surrounded the monarchy, was 'trodden down by the hoofs of the Swinish multitude.'[17] This time, Coleridge used Burke's infamous expression without his previous irony, and accords it the definite article[18] to suggest that all the lower classes could be categorised in this way. Although Coleridge still emphasised that the people's Jacobin behaviour was not endemic, but the result of them being 'ignorant, distressed',[19] there is no doubt that their unsuitability for power had been amply demonstrated. Coleridge had now reached the conclusion that, no matter how worthy of sympathy and help the lower classes were, the

real heart of the nation resided in the middle and upper classes. Indeed, he accorded them the distinction of being termed 'the people' to differentiate them from the more ignorant, immoral lower classes: 'the higher and middle classes - say rather ... the people at large as distinguished from the mere populace'.[20] We need to turn now to Wordsworth's and Coleridge's view of these two classes.

The two poets already regarded the middling orders of society with increased esteem by the turn of the century. This admiration was to grow stronger during the Napoleonic War. Since 1803 Wordsworth had been a freeholder and, therefore, it was only natural that he appealed more and more to the small tenant farmers and lesser property owners as the essential bulwark of the Constitution. This idea, already tentatively voiced in his 1801 letter to Fox (discussed in Section I) was explored at greater length in his Westmorland Address (1818). In the Westmorland election, he regarded the aristocratic Lowther candidates as the natural choice for the country community and, to support his case, he cited that all the worthiest elements in the community were already agreed. He identified these stable, high-principled people as the middling class. Indeed, he argued that all the national Tory candidates had proved their worth by the fact that,

> nearly the whole of the leading Gentry; that the Magistracy - all but a single Individual; that the Clergy and the Members of the other liberal Professions - with very few exceptions; and a vast body of Tradesmen and Manufacturers, and of substantial Yeomen, the honest Grey-coats of Westmorland, have already declared themselves of one mind upon this appeal to their judgements. Looking to a distance, they see the worth and opulence, the weight of character, and the dignity and respectability of station, that distinguish the numerous list of Freeholders resident in London, who have jointly and publicly testified their satisfaction in the conduct of our present Representatives.[21]

The majority of the middle classes of both town and country approved of the Tory Ministry. For Wordsworth, this is proof enough of the Ministry's capabilities because this was a class that could be relied upon for its sound principles and judgement; similarly, the worth of the middle classes was confirmed by their support for such an admirable party.

Although the lower orders possessed a moral potential, Wordsworth believed it was the middle class which could be relied upon to translate

their moral spirit into practical reality and use their judgement wisely in selecting parliamentary candidates. The franchise was only secure in their hands. As Wordsworth noted, 'the People have ever been the dupes of extremes'[22], and without the focus of a nationalist cause, they were too easily swayed to be entrusted with the vote or any political power. The middle class, through their property, had a strong stake in the nation itself; they were well educated and mindful of traditional values. Thus, they provided a more stable, reliable electorate:

> the result of this canvass has already shown that a vast majority of you are proof against assault, and remain of sound mind. Such example of Men abiding by the rules of their Forefathers, cannot but encourage others, who yet hesitate, to determine in favour of the good cause. The more signal the victory the greater will be the honour paid to fixed and true principles, and the firmer our security against the recurrence of like innovations.[23]

In his Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff, Wordsworth had trusted the people with the franchise; now only the middle class were accorded that right. Wordsworth emphasised his complete identification with this moral middle class by signing his Address in 1818 as 'A FREEHOLDER'. His identity with this social group, and their traditional values and rights, rather than with the common people, had become the determining characteristic of Wordsworth's political philosophy.

Although Wordsworth included the commercial middle class in his definition of the class as a whole, his writings still emphasised the small property owners and yeomen farmers as the most dependable element within the group. Coleridge, however, singled out the commercial classes for special praise. He believed that Europe's commercial system was a force for civilisation. It not only made countries, like Britain, more prosperous and comfortable, it also maintained a harmonious balance between countries, by linking them together through trade. Moreover, this international cooperation promoted a more moral outlook on the world. The middle class which operated this commercial system was revered. Coleridge attacked Napoleon, in part, because he had disrupted commerce and so reduced Europe to,

> the wretched state in which it was before the wide diffusion of Trade and Commerce, deprives its' Inhabitants of comforts and advantages to which they and their Fathers had been, for more than a Century, habituated, and thus destroys, as far as his

> power extends, a principal source of Civilisation, the origin of a middle class throughout Christendom, and with it the true Balance of Society, the parent of international Law, the foster-nurse of general Humanity, and (to sum up all in one) the main Principle of Attraction and Repulsion, by which the Nations were rapidly though insensibly drawing together in one system, and by which alone they could combine the manifold Blessings of distinct character and national independence, with the needful stimulation and general influences of Intercommunity, and be virtually united without being crushed together by Conquest.[24]

Coleridge's belief in the centrality of the commercial middle classes to national and international society is abundantly evident. They were no less than the lynch-pin of civilisation, justice, social unity and moral value.

Coleridge also recognised the similar contribution which the rest of the middle class made to national life. He praised 'the source of the virtue, comforts and increasing amity of mankind, the commercial and middle classes.'[25] All of the middling orders, whether in business, trade or agriculture, were agents for the welfare and progress of the nation. It was appropriate that this admirable class, rather than the volatile lower orders, should be entrusted with the right to vote. None the less, it will be argued below in Section III, that Coleridge did begin to perceive flaws in the commercial classes in the post-war period, as their pursuit of profit began to overwhelm the finer moral instincts they had once displayed.

Lastly, Wordsworth and Coleridge considered the role and value of the upper classes. If the middle class could now be trusted to use the vote wisely, the ar istocracy increasingly seemed the natural governing class. A mixture of personal and ideological factors caused Wordsworth to re-evaluate the landed classes and Coleridge to strengthen the growing admiration he had already shown before 1802. During the Napoleonic War both poets concurred with Burke's view that the aristocracy were the natural rulers of society.[26] Burke had argued that the great landed families were a repository of the accumulated experience and wisdom of the past, and were the trustees for the values of the nation. They had a hereditary responsibility towards the people and held power in trust for them.[27] This meant that they should not act in a detached way, although they sometimes had to look to the higher interests of national principle. They were aided in this task by their privileged,

independent position and their greater freedom from greedy, selfish ambition. They were the best educated class and, through their property, were indissolubly linked to national welfare and security. Thus, they were the strongest bulwark of the constitution, its liberties, the rule of law and civil order.

In accepting this Burkean position, Wordsworth's opinions underwent a great transformation. Just as his personal experience of the aristocracy before 1802 had helped to determine his hatred for that class, so his contacts with them thereafter caused him to re-evaluate their worth.[28] In 1803 Sir George Beaumont, patron of the arts and a member of the local gentry, presented Wordsworth with a small estate at West Applethwaite near Skiddaw. Wordsworth instantly acquired the political status of an enfranchised freeholder and, from this point onwards, one can chart Wordsworth's steady progress into propertied social circles. The Beaumonts showed Wordsworth much kindness, when his brother, John, died at sea and their generosity and care caused Wordsworth to reflect on the moral sensibility of the landed gentry. By 1812 Wordsworth had moved into the relative grandeur of Rydal Mount; his life had become much more comfortable and he could appreciate the greater independence that life among the gentry ensured. His close relationship with ordinary village life was now curtailed as the Wordsworths moved among a new circle of richer friends. Wordsworth even dined with his old adversary, the Bishop of Llandaff, at Colgarth by Windermere.[29] The two men now had more to unite, than divide, them politically. In general, Wordsworth's life had become more sedentary, settled and conservative. Apart from poetry, he interested himself in landscaping his own garden at Rydal, and the Beaumonts' at Coleorton - the antithesis of the natural countryside which had inspired him in his youth.

It is obvious that this new lifestyle must have predisposed Wordsworth to the virtues of the landed class, their orderly lifestyle, their belief in property rights and their general fitness to govern. It was, however, his improved relations with the Lowther family which were to prove most crucial in this respect. His original dealings with them had provoked much of his subsequent hatred of the aristocracy - now their actions were to have an opposite effect. Apart from settling the long-standing debt, Lord Lowther gained Wordsworth the post of Distributor of Stamps for Westmorland, in 1813, just at the very point when the cost of educating his family was beginning to trouble Wordsworth.

Although the position was not handsomely paid, it did provide a steady income.[30] He kept the post until 1842 and then passed it on to his son, Willy. Now, Wordsworth himself was indebted to the aristocracy and his friendship with the Lowthers increased. By 1818 the poet was enthusiastically committed to aiding the Lowther candidates at the general election. The position also helped Wordsworth identify more strongly with the Tory government and its policies, since he was now one in receipt of government patronage. The episode is also revealing in that it shows Wordsworth accepting a position he had done nothing to earn, but which he had gained through political influence. This was a practice he had once condemned, but he was now to defend it as a necessary lubricant of the constitution.

This volte face did not go unnoticed by his contemporaries, who attacked Wordsworth for becoming the 'property' of the government and a toady of the aristocracy. In the 'Dedication' to the 1818 edition of Don Juan, Lord Byron attacked Wordsworth as a shabby pension seeker.[31] In a note appended to the passage, Byron summed up the anger and disappointment of the second generation of Romantic poets, who now regarded their one-time hero as a political apostate and a sycophant of the nobility:

> Wordsworth's place may be in the Customs - it is, I think, in that or the Excise - besides another at Lord Lonsdale's table, where this poetical charlatan and political parasite licks up the crumbs with a hardened alacrity; the converted Jacobin having long subsided into the clownish sycophant of the worst prejudices of the aristocracy.[32]

It is not surprising that such attacks from fellow poets, and Edinburgh Review critics, only served to drive Wordsworth further into the more congenial, appreciative company of his new friends.

The relationship between political philosophy and private experience is not, however, so mechanical or one-sided. Although Wordsworth's new social and political milieu undoubtedly affected his political sympathies, the fact that he accepted a government position, and aristocratic favours, shows that he was already well disposed to their viewpoint. The opportunities he was offered may have been accidental, but his acceptance was not. Personal circumstances and evolving beliefs influenced and reinforced each other. The result was a dramatic reversal of sympathy. After years of castigating the aristocracy, Wordsworth now expressed his unbounded admiration for their moral qualities and

political values, and, not surprisingly, presented the Lowther family as the very paradigm of a natural ruling order.

Wordsworth argued in his Westmorland Address (1818) that 'the antiquity of [the] House of Lowther'[33] justified that family in providing the country with its representatives in Parliament. The Lowthers knew the district, its people and its traditions, and they had served it well over the centuries. Through this appeal to tradition and pragmatism, and by virtue of their propertied stake in the nation, the Lowthers were best fitted as rulers. As aristocrats, they had vital qualities possessed by few others:

> It must unavoidably happen therefore that, at all times, there will be few persons, in such a County, furnished with the stable requisites of property, rank, family, and personal fitness, that shall point them out for such an office, and dispose them to covet it, by insuring that degree of public confidence which will make them independent, comfortable, and happy, in discharging the duties which it imposes.[34]

The aristocracy was the only class which united all these virtues and which had the material means to act with independence and principle in the discharge of their duties. They were the most responsible and stable class, and the natural choice as the rulers of society.

The two qualities which most marked them out for this role was their hereditary property and their links with tradition. It was the 'long-continued possession of large property'[35] which made the Lowthers ideal representatives of Westmorland. The small farmers and free-holders certainly possessed some property, but it was not so great nor held for so long. They were fit to exercise the right to vote, but the larger estates of the aristocracy were more permanent and provided them with a more solid stake in the nation and its traditional values. The nobility were a stable part of the national fabric and could be relied upon to defend the country's security and welfare. Wordsworth had once argued that the workers of the soil were nearer their country's roots and, in a moral sense, 'owned' the land, but after 1802 it was the actual, time-honoured ownership of land by the aristocracy, which counted for most in political, social, and even moral, terms. The reality and substance of existing social circumstance now carried more value in Wordsworth's political philosophy, than intangible, abstract principles. The aristocracy had been transformed, in

Wordsworth's eyes, into the custodians of the entire nation and even his revered small farming class owed their security to them. He now argued 'that some Families must be permanently great and opulent, or there would be no security for the possessions of the middle ranks, or the humble Proprietor'.[36]

Wordsworth did recognise that the aristocracy, as governors, could not ignore the lower orders. They had to be wary not 'to violate their wishes and shock their sense of right'.[37] The nobility had to listen to the opinions of the people and attend to their welfare, even if Wordsworth now envisaged this relationship more in feudal terms of a lord tending to his tenants. Even in this respect, the aristocracy were best suited to aid the nation and ensure that the interest of the people was noticed:

> Opulence, rank, station, privilege, distinction, intellectual culture - the notions naturally following upon these in a Country like England, are, protection, succour, guidance, example, dissemination of knowledge, introduction of improvements, and all the benefits and blessings that among Freemen are diffused, where authority like the paternal, from a sense of community of interest and the natural goodness of mankind, is softened into brotherly concern.[38]

In a united and cohesive nation such as Britain, the virtues and advantages of the aristocracy helped all of society and ensured the welfare of everyone. The aristocracy held together 'the frame of society'[39] by being responsible for all and uniting everyone in their paternal concern. Their higher status enabled them to act in a more independent way, but their traditional ties with the land and its people prevented them forgetting social needs. In Britain where the classes were linked by 'respectful attachment'[40] the aristocracy were 'the Friends and Benefactors'[41] of the ordinary people, whereas in the divided society of Ancien Regime France, the privileges of the aristocracy had merely led to self-gratification and a neglect of social responsibilities.

It is also evident, from the passage above, that Wordsworth had revised his opinion of rank, distinctions and privilege. In the 1790s he had argued that these were seldom earned by the aristocracy and were meaningless compared to the real honour gained by moral behaviour and thus open to all. In his Answer to Mathetes (1809), however, Wordsworth now argued that titles, wealth and station were not just important as rewards, but also as 'modes of power, things that may enable him to be

more useful to his contemporaries'.[42] They inspired the recipient to try to accomplish ever-greater achievements which would benefit the whole of society. These distinctions also inspired the rest of the nation and, being hereditary, remained a fine example to future generations. Far from being undeserved, Wordsworth now believed that such honours were an ever-present source of moral fortitude.

It was only in the post-war years that Wordsworth began to entertain a few doubts about the actions of the aristocracy. These will be explored in greater depth in Section III. Wordsworth came to believe that the nobility were beginning to indulge too freely in speculative schemes for their own private benefit and so were neglecting their rightful duties as moral leaders of society. In their pursuit of commercial and financial ventures, they were apt to forget their essential links with the people.[43] Similarly, the poor were suffering more and more from 'the spread of manufactories and the baleful operation of the Poor Laws'[44] and, in their distress, were becoming distanced from the land, their aristocratic rulers, and the rest of society. The traditional, moral bonds, from which the nation was forged, were beginning to weaken and the aristocracy were in danger of abrogating their responsibilities. Moreover, their political status, which was dependent on their traditional role within the community, was put in jeopardy. In general, however, Wordsworth still trusted the aristocracy to re-establish these traditional bonds which linked society into one nation - indeed, they were the only class with this capability.

In 1793, Wordsworth had trusted the common people to vote wisely for middle class representatives; by 1802 the enfranchisement of the people lay in the future and all his hopes rested in rule by the small landowning class; by 1818 Wordsworth only entrusted the middling orders with the franchise while the natural ruling class, the fulcrum of society itself, was confirmed as the aristocracy.

By the end of the Revolutionary War, Coleridge had come to respect the whole of the great landed classes more than Wordsworth, even though he hoped this class would become more open to men of merit. After 1802 Coleridge supported the political usefulness of the aristocracy, but he became even more doubtful whether their potential for moral leadership was being fully realised.

Coleridge's fortunes during the Napoleonic Wars were very different

from his friend's.[45] His annuity from the Wedg wood family, whose business interests had suffered in the war, was cut to £75. Coleridge was, to a large extent, dependent on his salary as a journalist on the Courier and on the money he earned from his books and lecturing. Supporting a large family, and an expensive drug addiction, meant that he was never financially secure. Nor was he settled domestically. He travelled abroad and lived a peripatetic existence in Britain, oscillating mostly between London and the Lakes. Indeed, for the rest of his life, Coleridge was never to live in a home of his own, nor did he have any property, or the right to vote. He also had to suffer the same literary and political attacks, as Wordsworth, from the Whig Opposition and the Edinburgh Review. Thus, although he mixed in Tory circles through his work on the Courier, he was not indebted to the aristocracy. Until 1816, Coleridge was in many ways a rootless outsider, rather than part of a comforting group of conservative, propertied friends. It was only in that year that he settled down to live with the Gillmans, controlled his opium addiction, and finally became the much-visited 'sage of Highgate' and a more settled member of the London Establishment.

These very difficult experiences meant that Coleridge never had the same close affinity to the aristocracy as Wordsworth. Although Coleridge's politics, after 1802, were undeniably conservative, he was still able to retain a more critical, less blinkered, view of events than Wordsworth. This unsettled life was partly a function of Coleridge's own personality but, increasingly, in the midst of trauma and disruption, he yearned for the stable, conservative, domestic values which he had rarely ever known. Thus, while Wordsworth embraced conservative theory and aristocratic values from a position of close affinity and sympathy, Coleridge also endorsed these, (in a more sceptical spirit) because they represented a stability and security he had never been close to, but which he needed. While Wordsworth's esteem for the aristocracy had been born of personal contact, Coleridge's admiration was born of a sense of personal alienation.

Coleridge regarded the peerage as an essential part of the British constitution:

> it has been the habit of our mind to think with great respect of feudal institutions in general, and with an especial admiration of this particular part of it, hereditary succession. We regard it, as forming of itself a limitation of monarchial power.[46]

In order to be effective as a bulwark of the constitution, Coleridge argued that the peerage could never be allowed to become too large. He was critical of Pitt's many new appointments to the peerage because he diluted their power and weakened their role as a constitutional check, since they then owed their elevation to the Crown.[47] In advocating a mostly hereditary peerage in this manner, Coleridge was following Burke's 1780 ideas on economical reform.[48] Like Wordsworth, Coleridge contended that the hereditary aristocracy had a real stake in their nation's welfare and security through their long possession of land and their consequent links with national traditions. The current French leaders, such as Napoleon, had had no such advantages, and therefore little good could be expected of their policies: '[They] have no stake in their country, no honourable family pride, no natural influence.'[49] Coleridge believed that the aristocracy were the natural rulers of society and the main upholders of time-honoured moral values. Their education and experience meant that intelligent, just, responsible policies could be expected from them. He praised their 'wealth and rank, which are our best attainable securities for (an average at least of) integrity and knowledge'.[50] Although the aristocracy did not always guarantee these qualities, they were the class which best served the nation in this respect.

Although Coleridge praised the British nobility, he did not believe that all aristocracies were equally virtuous; everything depended on circumstance. Like Wordsworth, he still believed that the old French aristocracy had been far from faultless. They had cared little for the common people or the traditional moral values which linked society together, and which the British aristocracy had done so much to preserve. Coleridge believed that Burke had been wrong to praise the French nobles so unreservedly:

> The extravagantly false and flattering picture, which BURKE gave of the French nobility and Hierarchy, has always appeared to me the greatest defect of his, in so many respects invaluable work.[51]

Burke had been blind to their lack of responsibility and duty.

Coleridge also criticised other conservative apologists for the French nobility who had justified their aristocratic privileges as an inalienable right. Coleridge argued that this was as false as the radicals' case for the inalienable rights of the people:

> They defended the exemptions and privileges of all privileged Orders on the presumption of their inalienable Right to Them, however inexpedient they might have been found, as universally and abstract ly as if these privileges had been decreed by the supreme Wisdom instead of being the Offspring of Chance or Violence, or the inventions of human prudence. Thus while they deemed themselves defending, they were in reality blackening and degrading, the uninjurious and useful privileges of our English Nobility, which (thank Heaven!) rest on nobler and securer grounds.[52]

The privileges of the British aristocracy rested on the pragmatic basis that they were useful to society. They also rested on their traditional, propertied links with the nation which ensured that the nobility were always a force for morality, sound government and national unity. These were the true grounds for justifying privilege rather than the meaningless concept of abstract, inalienable rights.

After the war ended, in 1815, Coleridge began to doubt whether even the British aristocracy were fulfilling their proper role in the nation state. Now that the moral imperative of the war had subsided, rational feeling seemed to be weakening and there was a general return to moral laxity. The post-war climate of money-making and commercial exploitation had touched even the landed aristocracy and Coleridge believed they were losing their sense of responsibility to the community at large. The traditional values of the landed classes should have been a check on the materialism of the new capitalist spirit: 'Of the natural counter-forces to the impetus of trade the first, that presents itself to my mind, is the ancient feeling of rank and ancestry.'[53] The aristocracy, however, now regarded their workers as a means for making profits, rather than people entitled to their guardianship. In 1832 Coleridge looked back on this post-war period and explained the resurgence of radicalism and the lower orders' emphasis of rights over duties, by referring to the upper class's increasing subordination of persons to things.[54]

Coleridge perceived the social classes slowly drifting apart and the old interdependent bonds of responsibility and duty being eroded. The commercial spirit had poisoned the minds of the aristocracy and before the rest of society could be morally enlightened, the aristocracy needed to rededicate themselves to original moral principles:

> But I am greatly deceived, if one preliminary to an efficient education of the labouring classes be not the recurrence to a more manly discipline of the intellect on the part of the learned themselves, in short a thorough re-casting of the moulds, in which the minds of our Gentry, the characters of our future land-owners, Magistrates and Senators, are to receive their shape and fashion.[55]

In particular, Coleridge hoped that the upper classes would study the truths to be discovered in the Bible itself and apply these to society, as they had traditionally done in the past. Through Christian teaching they could re-discover the sense of moral duty, which justified their privileged status in society.[56] Coleridge, like Wordsworth, did believe that the aristocracy were capable of spearheading this moral renewal in society and were uniquely qualified to effect the task successfully, as they had always done throughout the nation's history.

It has been argued that, although Wordsworth and Coleridge still believed in the fundamental equality of men before God, this principle was now less important, pragmatically, than the actual distinctions between the classes which had arisen over the centuries and were honoured by time and utility. The two men still sympathised with the lower orders and were concerned for their welfare. Politically, socially and even morally, however, the role and importance of the poor had become marginalised in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's philosophy. Their material, intellectual and moral condition could be improved, but this could only be managed effectively within the necessary limitations of their class. For all practical, political purposes, the middle classes and the aristocracy had emerged as the true, natural, governing class: the former as voters; the latter as rulers. Before exploring how these ideas were to be translated into constitutional form, one final element in their view of national society needs to be examined since it had an important bearing on their politics.

Even although Wordsworth and Coleridge believed that each class had a distinct character and role, they saw them all as one interlinked social organism. The essential unity of society was a truth which had to be embodied in the nature of the constitution and in the aims of government. The political system had to reflect not only Britain's class structure, but also society as one living organism. This idea was ultimately to have a liberalising effect on Wordsworth's and Coleridge's conservative philosophy.

Wordsworth's ideas on organic society were shaped by his early pantheistic beliefs, as well as by the influence of Burke and Coleridge. In Tintern Abbey (1798), Wordsworth argued that, when man communed with Nature, there was a spiritual presence in all things which linked everyone, and everything, into one whole.[57] Sensing this divinity, man's thoughts and feelings became exalted and inspired. It was a moment of supreme truth and moral being.[58] Man was soothed and morally restored by recognising this harmony at the heart of all human existence. In the 1790s Wordsworth had seen this social unity in the pantheistic sense of God actually being present in all living things, linking them all together:

> all beings live with God, themselves
> Are God, existing in one mighty whole,
> As indistinguishable as the cloudless east
> At noon is from the cloudless west, when all
> The hemisphere is one cerulean blue.[59]

In Wordsworth's poetry after 1800, he still recognised the underlying unity of man and nature, and, in The Prelude (1805), he argued that 'in all things/I saw one life, and felt that it was joy'.[60] Although this sense of 'one life' was a force for moral strength, Wordsworth no longer believed that God was actually present in all life. God animated every form and imbued it with 'An active Principle',[61] but God was distinct from it. There was an essential harmony between the world and the individual:[62] this harmony was divine, but was not God.

Wordsworth argued from this that all the classes were inter-linked in one social unity. When these fundamental links between people were recognised and were acted upon, then the result was inevitably moral. Thus, all political systems and laws had to embody this sense of unity: they were indeed a practical expression of this principle:

> the maxims of all just law, and the measures of all sane practice, are only now enlarged or modified application of those dispositions of love and those principles of reason, by which the welfare of individuals, in their connection with each other, is promoted ....

And so Wordsworth proceeded to praise

> those benign elementary feelings of society, for the preservation and cherishing of which, among other important objects, government was from the beginning ordained.[63]

All government action had to be informed by a feeling for the unity of society. Even though the political system was based on property, the welfare of the whole always had to be considered. The concept of a nation was the most practical expression of this social unity for it was a single organism, yet it was comprised of distinct individuals. Nationalism inspired a moral feeling for the rest of society, but, by losing oneself in the unity of the nation, the individual was also capable of discovering his own distinct moral identity and role in society.[64] Thus, national society was a single organism which found expression through its individual parts, but those parts also attained meaning through the whole.

Wordsworth not only saw national society as an interlinked whole, but also as a living entity, whose frame remained the same, but whose component parts changed. If each element did not live, the frame of society, as it presently existed, would cease to function or be meaningful:

> The vast Frame
> Of social nature changes evermore
> Her organs and her members, with decay
> Restless, and restless generation, powers
> And functions dying and produced at need, -
> And by this law the mighty whole subsists:
> With an ascent and progress in the main;
> Yet oh! how disproportioned to the hopes
> And expectations of self-flattering minds![65]

Like Burke, Wordsworth believed that the existing framework of society was ideal. Each class had a distinct character, yet all subscribed to the good of the whole through the traditional moral links which bonded British society. This was an echo of all natural forms: 'In nature everything is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness.'[66] Indeed, Wordsworth even regarded his own poetic oeuvre as an entity composed of distinct, but interrelated, parts.[67] It will be argued that Wordsworth regarded the existing political constitution to be a perfect reflection of Britain's social organism. It had a traditional, fixed framework, but, within this, its distinct but interrelated parts could evolve; thus preserving the life and structure of the whole.

Coleridge's vision of society was more thoroughly organic than Wordsworth's or Burke's, for he regarded the universe, and all it contained, as a totally interdependent organism where every element, and the whole itself, were in a constant, necessary state of growth and change. The only constant

was the will of God.

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge had been influenced, in the 1790s, by the philosophy of David Hartley. Coleridge had been more interested in the comprehensiveness of Hartley's vision of society, rather than his specific arguments on the association of ideas or the need for systematic inclusiveness. Coleridge read widely in every branch of learning and perceived an interdependence and unity between all the disciplines of human thought. He was particularly interested in German philosophy and the ideas of Lessing, whose ideal of erudition was that man had to develop a wide knowledge and many interests, for only then could he discover new connections between all branches of learning. Classical authors, such as Aristotle and Plato, also exerted a strong influence on his thinking. Aristotle had argued that the universal and particular, form and matter, only existed through each other - they had no separate life. Plato concluded that since everything was interdependent, man could only reach fulfilment through society; he could not develop his faculties on his own. Coleridge imbibed these ideas and developed a theory on the organic nature of society, which was applicable to nineteenth century life. Coleridge believed that the unity discoverable from the omneity of society was a sign of God's work. Coleridge's own philosophy has been criticised often for its formlessness, but this was merely a function of his view that synthesis could never be reached. Although the world aspired to wholeness, it was in a state of constant change and could not be reduced to a system, without traducing the nature of life itself. Society was, therefore, an organic growth where there was only one constant - this was the animating and unifying spirit of God which suffused all. The political constitution had to reflect this central truth.

Coleridge believed that although society was comprised of distinct individuals and classes, each was dependent on the other in one unified process of living. A politician who recognised and acted upon this was the greatest brand of statesman. Coleridge praised Washington's 'associating power', and believed that he displayed 'a humanness of feeling, a complete union of himself with the mass of his fellow-citizens'.[68] In this way, every individual had to recognise their part in the social whole. Although each person had a distinct character, they could not be considered singly because they only assumed full meaning as part of a growing whole: 'This must be the case with all organised truths; the

component parts derive their significance from the idea of the whole.'[69] Similarly, the whole body was dependent on its organs for life and grew or changed as they did. Thus, for Coleridge, there was no fixed frame of society, as Wordsworth had proposed, for society itself was a protean growth. Society was not a framework sustained by its living elements, but a vast organism where the whole and its parts (the unity and the omneity) enlivened and changed each other in a constant process. Through the constant reaction and interdependence between the whole and the parts, society gained its life and its shape:

> Every power in Nature and its Spirit must evolve an opposite, as the sole means and condition of its manifestation: And All Opposition Is A Tendency To Re-Union ... The Identity of Thesis and Antithesis is the substance of all Being; their Opposition the condition of all Existence, or Being manifested; and every Thing or Phenomenon is the Exponent of a Synthesis as long as the opposite energies are retained in that Synthesis.[70]

Wordsworth (following Burke) had allowed for growth and change within the framework of society as a necessary dynamic element which conserved the whole; Coleridge saw society itself as a process where change was the condition of life. Organic growth was not merely a means for ensuring an end; the means was an end in itself.

Coleridge believed that this type of organic society was naturally moral. Since all people and classes were interdependent and could only attain full life through each other, it followed that the welfare and happiness of one's neighbour was also one's own. A Christian moral spirit was the unifying element which inter-related the individual with society. The virtue and happiness of each person inter-reacted with that of others resulting in an additional increase in happiness for society as a whole, and each of its members.[71] Any society which was infused by a true Christian spirit had to have an interrelated social structure; similarly, a recognition of the organic unity of life predic ated a moral spirit:

> What is of permanent and essential interest to one man must needs be so to all, in proportion to the means and opportunities of each. Woe to him by whom these are neglected, and double woe to him by whom they are withheld; for he robs at once himself and his neighbour. That man's Soul is not dear to himself, to whom the Souls of his Brethren are not dear. As far as they can be influenced by him, they are parts and properties of his own soul,

> their faith his faith, their errors his burthen, their righteousness and bliss his righteousness and his reward - and of their Guilt and Misery his own will be the echo.[72]

British society and her constitution had to reflect this interdependence, if a moral spirit was to be sustained. The nation was, itself, an organic unity; a whole composed of distinct citizens and classes. Its laws, institutions and traditions were the practical means of organising all the people into a national unity, a body politic.[73] These constitutional forms reminded people of their dependence on each other and fortified the traditional, moral bonds which linked national society into one harmonious whole. The individual spirit was not lost in this process, but gained a greater distinctness and a sense of moral purpose through participation in these constitutional forms. Coleridge believed that British society and her constitution best reflected and promoted the organic unity of all life. The interdependent social structure of Britain's class system, as well as the network of her trade and property, and the inter-relationship between her institutions, ensured that a Godly moral spirit flowed more surely through British society and government than any other country.[74] Coleridge believed that all Britain's advantages contributed to promote a thoroughly organic (and therefore, moral) national constitution, unlike any other:

> those and the like influences, peculiar, some in kind and all in the degree, to this privileged island, are the buttresses, on which our foundationless well-doing is upheld, even as a house of cards, the architecture of our infancy, in which each is supported by all.[75]

This was Coleridge's image of a perfect constitution. Government did nor originate in any contract; it did not have any fixed origin nor even a fixed framework. The constitution was a growing organism with living, interdependent parts. It reflected the national organism itself and changed as society itself changed, in one great living process.

Coleridge further argued that nations themselves were only parts of an even greater organism, comprising the whole life of the universe.[76] The only constant core of truth which united all these organic bodies (individual, nation and universe) was the Will of God. It linked them all in one harmonious whole. While Wordsworth appealed to nationalism as a means of reminding people of the moral unity to be found in society; Coleridge appealed to religion. For Coleridge this was a more profound

appeal, for religion, itself, informed all true nationalist feeling. Coleridge did not see the universe as an attribute of God in any pantheistic sense, but God's power had invested the universe with life:

> I adore the living and personal God, whose Power indeed is the Ground of all Being, even as his will is the efficient, his wisdom the instrumental, and his Love the final, Cause of all Existence; but who may not without fearful error be identified with the universe, or the universe to be considered as an attribute of his Deity.[77]

Thus, the organic unity of society could only be properly appreciated by exercising one's reason (which was a divinely-inspired faculty) and by recourse to religious belief. Reason and religion were analogous yet distinct, powers for understanding the true oneness of life. Reason helped one consider the universal:

> [It] is the science of the universal, having the ideas of ONENESS and ALLNESS as its two elements or primary factors. In the language of the old schools, Unity + Omneity = Totality.[78]

Reason, however, was only capable of comprehending the Universal in an abstract sense; religious principles were also required because they helped one understand the particular and the wholeness that was to be found in each. Only by using reason and religion could the complete interdependence and unity of life be understood, and then be realised in a more pragmatic fashion:

> Reason as the science of All as the Whole, must be interpenetrated by a Power, that represents the concentration of All in Each - a Power that acts by a contraction of universal truths into individual duties, as the only form in which those truths can attain life and reality. Now this is RELIGION, which is the EXECUTIVE of our nature, and on this account the name of highest dignity, and the symbol of sovereignty.[79]

The Will of God was discoverable in the Bible, which was the 'Statesman's Manual' and Coleridge believed that the Established Church of England was a practical embodiment of His Word. Thus, religion was not only a means of understanding the organic unity of society, but was also a practical guide for attaining a social structure and political constitution which embodied this truth. Losing oneself in Christian teaching, rather than in one's own country, was Coleridge's means for

realising a truly organic state, with moral purpose. Coleridge still believed, however, that British society, its Church, and its 'foundationless' constitution came closest to translating this organic view of life into reality.[80]

Wordsworth's and Coleridge's idea of society was similar in many respects, yet quite distinct. Wordsworth contended that there was a fixed framework of society, the parts of which were in a state of slow, evolutionary change. Occasional political changes were required to reflect these social changes but only in order to conserve the existing whole. Coleridge's idea of society was more thoroughly organic. Society was composed of distinct elements, but these parts only achieved life through their interdependent relationship to the whole, and the whole only achieved meaning through its parts. Thus, society and the constitution existed in a constant process of change where the only absolute constant was the Will of God. Both these philosophies were essentially conservative. Wordsworth was concerned to maintain the existing social and political structure in a way which would always be meaningful. Coleridge also accepted existing society and did not welcome radical innovations which were foreign to its natural development, but this existing framework of society and government only reflected an interim stage in a much greater process of change. Coleridge's idea of society was more dynamic for the existing social and political structure was merely a departure point, not an end in itself. The only 'end' was the process of being. Thus, although Coleridge defended the national constitution as a perfect system suited to its point in time, it was in no way fixed; indeed, it was required to change. Coleridge wished to promote the idea of the constitution as part of the process of a living body politic.

It is now time to consider how their vision of society and its classes affected Wordsworth's and Coleridge's perception of national constitutions in general and their defence of the British model in particular.

(b) The Form of the National Constitution

The history of the French Republic had turned Wordsworth and Coleridge against the idea of promoting a democratic constitution, evolved from within Britain's current political state. After 1802

republicanism appeared as a flawed system of government, unsuited to the old nations of Europe. Both writers now adhered to a concept of the constitution which was securely based in tradition and pragmatic values. This constitution reflected the social structure of the nation and the moral links which bound it together. Before examining this political system in more detail it is necessary to consider whether Wordsworth and Coleridge still believed that a full democracy was appropriate for some nations, even if not for Britain.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century very few reformers favoured a constitutional system based on universal adult male suffrage. Only more radical figures such as William Cobbett and Henry Hunt contemplated this form of democracy. In the more conservative climate of the war years, many reformers, such as Burdett, only advocated the enfranchisement of the propertied middle classes. In his writings on Spain, however, Wordsworth did seem to endorse democratic values. He was impressed by the way in which the Spaniards had taken control of their own destiny by forming local juntas in an effort to govern themselves. Nevertheless, it will be argued that Wordsworth's support was grounded in the claims of national expedience, rather than any esteem for democracy as a political system.

Wordsworth believed that democracy was justified in Spain because it was the most expedient form of government in the specific circumstances when their liberties were being usurped by the French. In these exceptional circumstances, it was only natural for the whole nation to combine against the common foe. Democratic juntas were the most practical way of expressing the will of the united people in their struggle for freedom:

> The Spaniards became their own masters: and the blessing lay in this, that they became so at once ... it was thrust upon them. The perfidy and tyranny of Napoleon 'compelled', says the Junta of Seville in words before quoted, 'the whole Nation to take up arms and to choose itself a form of government ...' - Governments thus newly issued from the people, could not but act from the spirit of the people - be organs of their life.[81]

In these circumstances of national danger when all the people had been roused by a new level of consciousness, and when formal government had been destroyed, local democratic bodies were the best hope for rallying the nation against the French. Indeed, they were not only sanctioned on pragmatic grounds, but also by tradition, for Wordsworth drew an

analogy between the current struggle and the ancient Spanish fight for freedom against the Moors. In these former times, the people had also formed 'legislative assemblies' to counter the Arab threat.[82] The foundation of the French Republic in the 1790s had not rested on such secure grounds of pragmatism or tradition. Thus, Wordsworth argued that, although Spanish democracy was justified by current circumstances, French democracy had not been similarly sanctioned and had proved inappropriate.

Wordsworth's enthusiasm for the Spanish juntas should not be confused with an endorsement of democracy in general. It has already been noted that, after 1802, Wordsworth fully entrusted the common people only when they had been roused by some great national cause which united them in one consensus. He argued that democracy, as the practical embodiment of such feelings, was only justified under similar circumstances. He insisted that once the immediate, external threat had passed, power should revert to the centre, where it was more dependably used. The traditional parliamentary style of government, the Cortes, would then resume power:

> the cause of the People, in dangers and difficulties issuing from this quarter of oppression [i.e. Napoleon's armies], is safe while it remains not only in the bosom but in the hands of the People; or (what amounts to the same thing) in those of a government which, being truly <u>from</u> the People, is faithfully <u>for</u> them ... when a common centre became absolutely necessary, the power ought to have passed from the provincial Assemblies into the hands of the Cortes.[83]

Wordsworth was careful to emphasise that this Cortes should be a proper parliament, representative of all, and not just an oligarchical elite with the King at its head, for this 'could not be an image of a Nation like that of Spain.'[84]

This type of parliament, which Wordsworth did consider appropriate for peace-time Spain, was certainly not one based on universal suffrage. Indeed, his idea, expressed above, that a government in the hands of the people was the same as one <u>from</u> the people, reveals that, even in the juntas, Wordsworth may not have considered it necessary to involve the lower orders directly in their own government. Certainly, once the moral imperative of the unifying national struggle was over, Wordsworth did not believe that the people were capable of exercising their vote responsibly. The ignorance, volatile passions and material circumstances

of normal labouring life rendered them undependable as a political class. Parliament had to be composed of legislators who could speak for the people and be trusted by them, but they had to be men from the responsible, landed classes:

> What then is to be desired? Nothing but that the
> Government and the higher orders of society should
> deal sincerely towards the middle class and the lower:
> I mean, that the general temper should be sincere.[85]

Thus, it was only in exceptional, usually temporary, circumstances that democratic forms were justified. Wordsworth very rarely sanctioned it as a normal kind of government. In The Excursion (1814), Wordsworth only condoned democracy in those nations where it was pragmatic and where it had a long tradition; principally, in the small state of Switzerland where all the people could be represented and where democracy was time-honoured.[86] On these grounds, Wordsworth no longer considered America to be a suitable country for sustaining a republic. When the Wanderer visits America, he is disappointed and soon decides to leave:

> Let us, then, I said,
> Leave this unknit Republic to the scourge
> Of her own passions.[87]

America was a new country without traditions and, although there were great stretches of land where everyone could own property, it had become too vast and variegated as a nation. It was composed of so many differing social elements, all clamouring for a direct say in government, that republicanism could no longer control, or reconcile, all these conflicting passions. It merely allowed them expression and the result was a type of anarchy that threatened its destruction. Republicanism could only function well in a much smaller, homogeneous nation.

When Wordsworth wrote his Westmorland Address in 1818, at the height of renewed, post-war radicalism, he was able to warn the electors of the country against the evils of a system that had once been his ideal. He warned them not to follow the democratic principles which prevailed in Westminster, where every adult male had the right to vote:

> Let not your's be the first county in England, which,
> since the days of Wilkes, and after the dreadful
> example of France, has given countenance to principles

> congenial to the vice, profligacy, and half-knowledge, of Westminster; but which formerly were unheard of among us, or known only to be detested.[88]

Democracy was alien to the true traditions of the English nation and, by allowing the expression of all the shortcomings of the lower orders, it could only bring the country to ruin. It was neither traditional nor pragmatic, and it promoted immorality. In a large democracy there could be no stable government, merely a collection of conflicting passions and ideas. War, itself, tended to be stirred up by democratic states where the volatile feelings of the people held sway, rather than in states with traditional, propertied governments.[89] Wordsworth believed that no greater evil could befall a country than the extension of the franchise to the lower orders. Even if only those who paid taxes were given the vote, this would still lead to a national ferment since many of these people were uneducated and easily swayed.[90] In the midst of the chaos, which any form of democracy inevitably caused, the people would turn for relief, as they had in France, to the type of military despotism which promised to restore orderly government.[91] Democracy was therefore a supreme national danger.

Coleridge's views on democracy had already been formed by 1802. He still argued that the degree of democracy in any political system was dependent on the degree of property-owning in the community. In discussing 'Government by popular representation', he stated

> the great rule and law of which is, that it shall recede from universal suffrage, as the state of property in the nation to be represented recedes from the subdivisions of Agrarian equality.[92]

While holding to this general rule, Coleridge's view of democracy was to change in significant ways during the war years. After 1802 he did not much mention his old argument that a house was also a form of property which entitled the owner to vote. He did still hope that landed property would circulate and that men of talent would be able to participate in the political process by buying land.[93] Coleridge changed his opinions most, however, in the case of America, which he had formerly regarded as the only country where a republican system of government would be fully justified.

Even though Coleridge still admired the American government, he began to perceive flaws in its republican system which were beginning

to emerge with the passing of time. He noticed how rapidly America's population was growing and how this put a strain on the system because all the multifarious opinions and interests had to be represented in Congress.[94] This inevitably led to friction and conflict in the government, not to be found in nations with a more restricted franchise. Coleridge still believed that America, with its extensive land-holding among all classes required a more democratic franchise than would be appropriate in France or Britain,[95] but he began to doubt whether complete democracy was the answer.

The American case of republicanism placed Coleridge in a dilemma. The American democratic constitution could certainly be justified by his old appeal to property rights, but it could not be defended on the pragmatic or traditional grounds which he now considered so important. In Britain, the owning of property implied education and a regard for the traditional moral values of the nation. Although, therefore, only a few propertied men were represented, the interests of the entire nation were best served.[96] America, however, was a new country without long traditions, where the lowest and most ignorant man could acquire property. Thus, property-owning in America did not connote the same traditional, moral values which it ensured in Old World countries. Coleridge increasingly regarded ordinary Americans as ignorant and relatively uncivilised: 'The Americans are neither very amiable nor very enlightened, as a people.'[97] Despite owning property, therefore, most Americans still needed moral education and enlightenment, before they could participate responsibly in the political process:

> He alone is entitled to a share in the government of all, who has learnt to govern himself - there is but one possible ground of a right to freedom, viz. to understand and revere its duties.[98]

Many Americans were still deficient in this vital quality and were in need of a proper learned class who could instruct them.[99] Only when this had been accomplished would full democracy be justified in America.

Since society was an organic form, Coleridge realised that there could be no simple equation between political power and property-holding without consideration being given to all the other practical social circumstances of the nation. This is what the American political system had failed to account for. **America** had a fixed, written

constitution which had worked well in the first instance, when the country was small and its citizens had formed a compact, homogeneous group of responsible landowners. As the nation had grown and land-holding no longer guaranteed an educated, moral outlook, so the fixed constitution had proved too flexible to change. America's political system was not sufficiently organic; it did not grow in harmony with society as the British model did. Coleridge argued that America's republican constitution had been

> elevated from a particular experiment to an universal model. The word constitution altered to mean a capitulation, a treaty, imposed by the people on their own government, as on a conquered army - hence giving sanction to falsehood, and universality to anomaly !!![100]

No constitution, fixed or imposed in this way, could hope to be ever-relevant to changing society. It had to reflect not only the state of property, but also the traditional moral and social nature of the nation. Such a constitution was Britain's 'foundationless' organic political structure. It reflected the distribution of property, but, in Britain, property itself reflected all that was best in the nature of the nation.

The form of national constitution, which Wordsworth and Coleridge defended, was based on the Revolutionary Settlement of 1689. Conservative writers, such as Burke, had argued that this mixed and balanced constitution had preserved liberty, protected property, ensured the rule of law and upheld the sovereignty of Parliament. It had successfully reflected and maintained the social fabric of the nation, and any radical attempt to change this finely-tuned mechanism would only result in the disintegration of existing society. Burke had argued that the ancient constitution had been re-confirmed, not radically altered, in 1689 and only minor adjustments thereafter were required to conserve its vigour. No new political system had been established in 1689, and none needed to be invented now. The origins of this constitution were not be found in any pre-societal state of nature nor was it founded on an original contract, but instead its origins were immemorial and prescriptive. The British constitution was the fruit of social experience and the product of history; its principles and its practices were prescriptive. The Revolution Settlement of 1689 had

had been a means of recovering and confirming the traditional principles and liberties of the nation, which James II had subverted, not a means to discovering new ones. It had preserved the sovereignty enshrined in King, Lords and Commons. All this had been accomplished without violent change and in accordance with prescriptive rights. The 1689 Settlement had thus been an act of conservation, very different from the French Constitution of a century later. The men of 1689 had witnessed a revolution prevented, not made.[101]

It was not just conservative writers who appealed to the Revolution Settlement of 1689. After a period of retrenchment at the turn of the century, the radical movement began to revive in the 1810s, although its views had moderated. After the successful attack on them by patriotic conservatives in the 1790s, the later reformers mostly abandoned the natural rights school of Tom Paine and returned to the ideas of earlier radicals, such as Cartwright, Wyvill and Horne Tooke who preferred to appeal to history. They increasingly based their argument for political reform on a return to the principles which had been embodied in the 1689 Settlement.[102] They claimed these had been corrupted in the following century. They argued that the principles, which underpinned the Glorious Revolution, established the right to liberty of conscience, resistance to tyranny and the right to choose one's own government, but that these principles had not been turned into practice.[103] In this sense, the work of 1689 had still to be completed and this justified the need for moderate political reforms.

Wordsworth and Coleridge defended the constitution in Burkean terms as essentially the same system that had been sanctioned in 1689 and was still serving the country well. Nevertheless, they still had to answer this new, moderate case for reform which also appealed to the principles of the Revolution Settlement.

The appeal to the Old Whig ideas embodied in the 1689 Settlement became an important feature in Wordsworth's writings in the late 1790s.[104] Wordsworth closely followed Burke's arguments in favour of the existing system and believed that the Revolution Settlement had provided the form for an ideal constitution, which embodied all the best traditions from Britain's past. Until 1803, however, Wordsworth believed that Britain was still not adhering closely enough to these principles. The Peace of Amiens, signed with a despotic power, revealed that Britain had not

yet recovered the moral spirit which had been alive in the seventeenth century and which had prompted the 1688 Revolution. Although he did not appeal to the Settlement as a justification for specific political reforms, as the more moderate radicals did, Wordsworth did argue that there needed to be a return to the spirit of 1689. He admired the simple, moral uprightness of that earlier era and regarded it as an example for contemporary Britain:

> Great men have been among us; hands that penned
> And tongues that uttered wisdom - better none:
> The later Sidney, Marvell, Harrington,
> Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend.
> These moralists could act and comprehend:
> They knew how genuine glory was put on;
> Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
> In splendour: what strength was, that would not bend
> But in magnanimous meekness.[105]

These heroes of Wordsworth, from the seventeenth century, had helped to establish the national spirit of that age as one of moral rectitude - a spirit which was lacking in Britain in 1802.

It was not only the moral spirit of this Commonwealth tradition that was wanting; there was also a neglect of those time-honoured principles and customs which those men had supported and which had been encapsulated in the Revolution Settlement. Wordsworth appealed to the spirit of Milton as an exemplary presence that was needed in Britain once more. Her people, writers, institutions (civil and religious), and even the propertied classes, had all neglected their traditional principles by concluding a peace with tyranny itself.

> Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
> England hath need of thee: she is a fen
> Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
> Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
> Have forfeited their ancient English dower
> Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
> Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
> And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.[106]

Wordsworth does not invoke the spirit of Milton in these lines in order to justify the need for reforms in the constitutional structure, as the radicals proposed, but, instead, he is interested in ensuring that the existing system is adhered to and functions with the same moral spirit that was evident in Milton's time.

After Britain resumed war, in 1803, Wordsworth believed the nation

did recover this moral spirit and the traditional principles enshrined in the Revolution Settlement were alive once more. The only occasion, when Britain again faltered, was in 1808 when she signed the Convention of Cintra with the tyrant Napoleon. Once more, Britain had forgotten the moral principles of 1689 which had such a long and glorious national pedigree. These principles had not only found their ultimate, practical expression in the Revolution Settlement, but were derived from Britain's ancient past and were ignored at the nation's peril. Wordsworth reminded the government of,

> her long train of deliverers and defenders, her Alfred, her Sidneys, and her Milton; whose voice yet speaketh for our reproach; and whose actions survive in memory to confound us, or to redeem![107]

Despite this lapse, Wordsworth still believed that the traditional form of the constitution was safe in the hands of the Tory Ministry. In his Westmorland Address (1818), Wordsworth supported the ministerial Tory candidates as the true heirs of the Old Whig tradition, which dated back to 1689. The Whig candidate in the Westmorland election was Henry Brougham, whom Wordsworth termed an 'ultra-reform' Whig. Brougham sought changes in the constitution and so he was not a true exponent of Old Whiggism, as Wordsworth understood the term: a supporter of the existing constitution framed and fixed in 1689, but based on even more ancient principles. Brougham, in standing as a Whig, thus contravened what had once been the ideas of his own party:

> The public life of the Candidate who now, for the first time, solicits your suffrages, my Brother Freeholders, cannot, however, without injustice to that Party, be deemed a fair exponent of its political opinions. It has, indeed, been too tolerant with Mr. Brougham, while he was labouring to ingraft certain sour cuttings from the wild wood of ultra reform, on the reverend, though somewhat decayed, stock of that tree of Whiggism, which flourished proudly under the cultivation of our Ancestors.[108]

Wordsworth argued that, by 1818, the radical Whigs were anti-constitutional and the rest of the party were a spent force. It was the Tory Ministry of Lord Liverpool that best expressed and defended the true Old Whig tradition and the constitutional principles of 1689.

John Milton was also a key figure in Coleridge's political philosophy. He too admired the moral spirit of the great poet, that was such an

example and inspiration to all subsequent ages:

> Milton, austere, condensed, imaginative, supporting his truth by direct enunciation of lofty moral sentiment and by distinct visual representations, and in the same spirit overwhelming what he deemed falsehood by moral denunciation and a succession of pictures appalling or repulsive.[109]

Coleridge believed that the politics of Milton and the Old Whig writers of the seventeenth century were sternly moral and that it was these fine principles which had inspired the framers of the 1689 Settlement. The new Whigs of the 1810s, who wished to reform the structure of the constitution, he now included under the general terms of 'Jacobins'. They were the political and moral opposites of these earlier writers. Even though Milton had termed himself a 'republican', Coleridge argued that Milton's republicanism was the antithesis of the parliamentary reform favoured by contemporary Jacobinical Whigs:

> Milton became more and more a stern republican, or rather an advocate for that religious and moral aristocracy which, in his day, was called republicanism, and which, even more than royalism itself, is the direct antipode of modern jacobinism.[110]

Coleridge argued that the moral principles, espoused by Milton, lay at the heart of the constitution which had been re-formed in 1689. In the final chapter, it will be shown how Milton's advocacy of a moral aristocracy found an echo in Coleridge's own post-war writings when he argued the necessity for a 'clerisy' which could re-educate the people in Britain's traditional, moral and political principles.

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge believed that participation in the Napoleonic War had effected a moral renaissance in Britain and had returned the nation to those principles proclaimed by Hampden, Sidney and Russell.[111] Britain had become rededicated to the moral constitutional principles of 1689 which these men had helped to form. The constitutional fabric of the nation had been repaired. Coleridge regarded William III as the political saviour of the nation, while, the constitution, restored in 1689, was seen as a moral deliverance, as well as a triumph of time-honoured political truths. The spirit of those times was alive again:

> The Cranmers, Hampdens, and Sidneys; the Counsellors of our Elizabeth and the Friends of our other great deliverer the third William, - is it in vain, that <u>these</u>

> have been our Countrymen? Are we not the Heirs of their good deeds? And what are noble Deeds but noble Truths realized? As Protestants, as Englishmen, as the Inheritors of so ample an estate of Might and Right, an estate so strongly fenced, so richly planted, by the sinewy arms and dauntless hearts of our Forefathers, we of all others have good cause to trust in the Truth, yea, to follow its' pillar of fire through Darkness and the Desart, even though its hight should but suffice to make us certain of its own presence.[112]

Since the Revolution Settlement was, in this sense, a summation of the best of Britain's traditional principles, moral values and laws, Coleridge agreed with Burke that it could not be considered as a 'revolution' in the modern radical sense. It was an act of national conservatism and salvation. Writing as a lover of 'Old England', Coleridge defined the Revolution of 1688 as a

> Wise and necessitated confirmation and explanation of the law of England, erroneously entitled The English Revolution of 1688.[113]

Like Burke, Coleridge also attacked those moderate Whig reformers who believed that the present constitution had been perverted and that there was a need to return to the original intentions of 1689, or to even more ancient principles embedded in Britain's past. While acknowledging that their appeal to the past was a stronger basis for their argument, than the appeal to natural rights, Coleridge still argued that their case was false:

> They wish to bring back the Government of Great Britain to a certain form, which they affirm it to have once possessed: and would melt the bullion anew in order to recast it in the original mould.[114]

Coleridge argued that the current political system did already follow the form laid down in 1689 and was still informed by its ancient principles. Any modifications which had arisen over the hundred years since then were not corruptions of the original, but were pragmatic alterations which enabled the constitution to function in changed circumstances. Laws which had fallen into disuse, or had been changed, were laws which had gradually proved themselves inexpedient.[115] Any attempt to re-enact these laws in new and different circumstances was wrong-minded because they no longer had any current social meaning. Old customs and statutes could only be understood within their historical context. The Saxons may once have given every 'freeman' the right to vote, but it was quite

wrong for Whig reformers to wrench this term from its original context and argue that every man who was 'born free' should now have the right to vote. This was false to the original, much more limited, intentions of the Saxons.[116] Indeed, the full meaning of any law was only revealed by the way in which it inter-acted with the other laws of its time. To disjoin a law, from this inter-dependent matrix, was to falsify its original meaning and spirit.[117]

Coleridge believed that the constitution, established in 1689, was the most pragmatic expression of Britain's traditional values. The allowance for expedient change within its framework meant that the constitution would always remain relevant to the evolving society of Britain. Coleridge argued that this appeal to tradition and pragmatism was inherent in the Revolution of 1688 which had produced the constitutional Settlement of 1689. It had been an event which combined permanence and progression. The Revolution was,

> not more propelled by the spirit of enterprise and hazard in our commercial towns, than held in check by the characteristic VIS INERTIAE of the peasantry and landholders; both parties cooled and lessoned by the equal failure of the destruction, and of the restoration of monarchy; it was effected extrinsically, I say, by the same influences, which, (not in and of themselves, but with all these and sundry other modifications) combined under an especial control of Providence to perfect and secure the majestic Temple of the British Constitution![118]

France, which had lacked this 'providential counterpoise'[119] between permanence and progress, had only ever produced constitutions of extremes.

Coleridge clearly regarded the constitution, established in 1689, as an ideal form for Britain, but he still did not regard it (as Wordsworth and Burke did) as a complete success, requiring only a few minor, conservative changes to maintain its relevance. The 1689 Settlement had perfectly expressed the constant moral spirit and traditional principles of the nation, but these had to be realised in a practical form which progressed as society did. As we shall see, Coleridge only regarded 1689 as one point in a continuing political process. Its form still basically suited early nineteenth-century Britain, but the constitution itself was an organic growth. The constitution's qualities of permanence and progress ensured that the nation's principles would be constant, but not necessarily in their

present political form. There remained the potential for a very different type of constitution to grow from the existing one, as society itself lived and grew. This idea will become more evident as we proceed to discuss Wordsworth's and Coleridge's views on the existing structure of the national constitution and its potential for change.

Conservative writers argued that the 1688 Revolution had established or rather restored a mixed and balanced constitution which still perfectly served the needs and interests of the British people. It had achieved liberty, stability and prosperity. This constitution combined the virtues of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, without the dangers inherent in any one system. Each of these elements was perfectly balanced so that no one predominated. Although the representative element in the constitution was based on landed property, the House of Commons, which was the democratic part of the constitution, still had to represent the interests of the entire nation. Although the monarchy, aristocracy and the propertied classes had political and social privileges, these also entailed duties and a responsibility for the welfare of all. Burke argued that the landed classes were the trustees of the poor. Thus, even though only a few people were directly involved in the government of the country, the nature of the mixed and balanced constitution ensured that the interests of all were heeded.[120]

There was, however, one outstanding danger inherent in the system. If one element in the mixed constitution achieved undue importance or began to pull too strongly in an opposite direction to the rest, the balance of the constitution would be disturbed and consequently the existing structure of society would be imperilled. Conservatives argued that the use of patronage and influence was one method for maintaining the balance, and oiling the mechanism of the constitution.[121] Man's imperfect nature needed to be controlled by something more than a mere appeal to reason. It was necessary to engage man's self-interest - only then could he be relied upon to give of his best. Thus, conservatives argued that the use of influence and patronage was one of the best ways of ensuring good government and maintaining a balance of interest between the three elements of the constitution. William Paley had argued that since the Lords had less power than the Commons because the latter dominated in the raising of taxes, the balance between them

could only be sustained if the former had some controlling influence over the latter. Many conservative writers also argued that if there were not a certain allowance for the exercise of natural and legitimate patronage, then bribery and corrup tion of a more venal kind would soon replace it.

This use of influence was one aspect of the constitutional system which came under increasing criticism from reformers, as radicalism began to revive in the closing years of the war.[122] Most reformers had no intention of remodelling the entire constitution, but they were concerned by the growth of corrupt practices. During the war, taxes had increased, the civil and military establishments had grown, and there had been a consequent rise in the use of influence. While much of the nation was suffering hardship, government officials and contractors were prospering. Executive pow er seemed to be increasing at the expense of Parliamentary independence and the liberty of the subject. In the years after 1810, there was sustained attacks on all forms of corruption by radicals, such as Francis Burdett, who wanted a diminution in executive power and government patronage. Influence was opposed not merely on the grounds that it was a perversion of the original form of the constitution of 1689, but also because of its debilitating economic effect on the people. Thus, Wordsworth and Coleridge were not only concerned with defending the traditional balanced constitution, but also had to respond to this attack on influence, which they now regarded as an essential element for maintaining political harmony and stability.

It has already been noted that Wordsworth now regarded the aristocracy as the natural rulers of society and the landed classes as those best entitled to vote. The third element in the constitution was the monarchy which he had attacked so vigorously before 1802. Wordsworth now praised the monarchy as a vital part (indeed, the keystone) of the traditional balanced constitution. The Crown symbolised the permanence of Britain and safeguarded her political system, its liberties, laws and the Established Church:

> Hail to the Crown by Freedom shaped - to gird
> An English Sovereign's brow! and to the throne
> Whereon he sits! Whose deep foundations lie
> In veneration and the people's love;
> Whose steps are equity, whose seat is law.
> - Hail to the State of England![123]

During the course of the war, Wordsworth developed not only a great respect for the institution of monarchy, but a real affection for George III, whom he had once scorned. He wrote, with emotion, on the king's sad state of blindness and insanity in the 1810s and called on God, the King of Kings, to look kindly on this old man who had cared so much for his people.[124]

When the Napoleonic Wars ended, Wordsworth welcomed back the Bourbon king, Louis XVIII, and the other restored monarchs of Europe, but only on condition that, in future, they looked after their people in the same Christian way that George III had cared for his. Wordsworth only favoured monarchies if they were bound by a constitution, so that their power was balanced and circumscribed by the other elements in the political system. Wordsworth wanted to see a return to the old Gothic virtue of 'King and people pledged in mutual troth'.[125] He was anxious that the monarchs should not interpret their restoration as an endorsement of their former absolute rule. They now had to be responsible and dutiful to their own people:

> Be just, be grateful; nor, the oppressor's creed
> Reviving, heavier chastisement deserve
> Than ever forced unpitied hearts to bleed.[126]

Wordsworth believed that the war had not only taught that republicanism was unworkable, but that absolutist government had also been rejected. The only constitution, which had served the interests of all its nation, was the balanced system of Britain. Thus, the future success of the restored monarchies depended on them adhering to a similar series of checks and balances, and following the British example.

Wordsworth recognised that constitutional checks and balances ensured political stability, harmony and the judicious exercise of power:

> Looking up to the government with respectful attachment, we all acknowledge that power must be controlled and checked, or it will be abused.[127]

These checks and balances did not just need to operate between the three main elements of the constitution, but also within each element. Wordsworth, therefore, argued that there had to be a vigorous Opposition, within the House of Commons, which agreed with the governing party on fundamental national principles, but which was capable of checking the power and pretensions of the Government, if it became too mighty or

self-interested.[128] Wordsworth also recognised the need for checks and balances stretching beyond the constitutional framework into society as a whole. He believed that it was essential to counteract the growing radical sympathies of the towns with the more reliable, stable power of the propertied classes. If these democratic feelings were allowed to grow and infiltrate parliament, the balance of the constitution would be upset and the social structure destroyed. Wordsworth argued that the position of the propertied in government had to be strengthened in order to counteract and check these dangerous democratic forces. Only then would the constitutional balance be maintained:

> As far as it concerns the general well-being of the Kingdom, it would be easy to shew, that if the democratic activities of the great Towns and of the manufacturing Districts, were not counteracted by the sedentary power of large estates, continued from generation to generation in particular families, it would be scarcely possible that the Laws and Constitution of the Country could sustain the shocks which they would be subject to.[129]

Wordsworth contended that the balance and harmony of the constitution was sustained by patronage and influence. These allowed it to function more effectively. In the 1790s, Wordsworth had condemned the use of patronage and influence in government, but, by 1813, he, himself, had become a beneficiary of that system when the Lowthers gained him the post of Distributor of Stamps. Although Wordsworth did not condone bribery, he did come to the conclusion that aristocratic influence, and the use of places and pensions, were not real corru p tions, but devices for promoting good government and preventing worse types of corruption flourishing. His most sustained defence of influence, as a moral force, is to be found in his Westmorland Address (1818), where he uses the example of the House of Lowther to prove his case.

The Lowther family had represented Westmorland for generations and Wordsworth defended the influence they exerted in that count y as a force that was beneficial to all. He claimed that they had used their influence in the Westminster Parliament to ensure that government plans for the welfare of the nation were of especial benefit to the people of Westmorland.[130] Their influence within the county was justified because of their 'long-continued possession of large property'.[131] This ancient, and close, relationship with the county meant that there was an identity of interests between the Lowthers and the people of Westmorland. Thus,

they were perfectly justified in using their influence to determine who was to represent the county - it could only be for the benefit of all.

Wordsworth hardly considered the possibility that influence could be used for oppressive ends or that it might produce inept legislators. He believed that influence, wielded by the propertied classes, could only ever be used in the national interest and for moral purposes. In one passage of his Address he did, hypothetically, consider what could happen if influence were used for immoral purposes. He agreed with Burke that, even in these unlikely circumstances, the system of influence and patronage still had to be defended. The instances of abuse would be few in number and any change in the system might well destroy the whole constitutional edifice. A few minor blemishes were worth suffering if there was a risk of destroying the system, and leaving the door open for a much more corrupt system: namely democracy.

> But, looking at the present constitution and measure of this influence, you cannot but perceive, Gentlemen, that if there were indeed anything in it that could justly be complained of, our duty might still be to bear with the local evil, as correcting an opposite extreme in some other quarter of the Island; as a counterpoise of some weight elsewhere pressing injuriously upon the springs of social order. How deplorable would be the ignorance, how pitiful the pride, that could prevent us from submitting to a partial evil, for the sake of a general good![132]

The working of the constitution was a mysterious phenomenon and, even if it did have some minor faults, these should not be tampered with in case even these faults proved to be a vital part of the successful whole. The constitution, held together by bonds of influence, had proved itself pragmatically and this fact overrode other considerations. The alternative was to risk destruction and be thrown 'into the arms of a flaming democracy!'[133]

In the 1790s Wordswo r th had argued that government places should be filled by people with merit, but that pensions were often awarded to the undeserving. Now, he defended the place and pension system as integral parts of the constitution. He still recognised that fitness for office could not just depend on one's influence, but that there also had to be evidence of real ability. He believed, however, that the landed classes were more likely to possess this ability. A system

which was open only to the talented was dangerous because there was much spurious talent around, as well as restless ambition and jockeying for positions. An open system, based on merit alone, produced the chaos, witnessed in France, without the steadying effect of 'the passive influence of property and hereditary rank.'[134] Thus, a balance had to be struck between a certain amount of necessary ability as well as the stabilising power of influence which could only be derived from property and rank:

> What one individual has gained by the power of his connection, and a reasonable degree of fitness for his office, another may attain with less interest if his abilities should be greater. This is as it ought to be. These mixed operations keep things in a salutary state; thus one power prevents the undue action of another.[135]

In either case influence was essential because it implied so much about one's education, experience, and the traditional values associated with property. Even those with talent still had to acquire some of the influence which property bestowed, before they could perform their duties well. It was not just that influence maintained a balance in the constitution, but also that the values and qualities implied by the possession of influence made it a strong and useful force in government.

Since those with influence were usually the best educated class, bound by their property to the security of the nation, Wordsworth also argued that the military establishment ought not to be staffed on the grounds of talent alone. He answered Whig criticisms by arguing that men of property and influence were needed in the army and navy because their reliable civic virtues were then interwoven into the military administration, making it a more formidable nationalist force:

> By allowing interest and purchase to prevail to a certain extent, (though well knowing this cannot be done without some ill consequences) we interweave the property of the country with the fabric of that body which is to defend it; and along with the property are interwoven the rights, privileges and liberties of the subject.[136]

Although a modicum of talent would always be required to fill these posts, the patronage system was still the best means of guaranteeing this. Even though the system had occasional faults it was still to

be preferred to a meritocracy which could only lead to rampant self-interest, inimical to the national good.[137]

Wordsworth argued that the use of influence was a stable means of operating the constitution. It was peculiarly well fitted to national circumstances and involved a network of mutual duties and responsibilities. Since the landed classes were the most important segment of society, it was only proper that they should have a right to use their natural influence in government. Their interest was also the nation's, and so it would be to the benefit of all. Although the operation of influence had not been part of the original 1689 constitution, it had proved to be a felicitous and pragmatic addition to the system, which enabled a harmonious balance to be struck between the three elements of the constitution. It helped to preserve the original principles of the constitution:

> The only question which a practical politician can tolerate for a moment relates to the degree of this influence; has it been carried too far? The considerations which put me upon writing the present note ... do not require the discussion of this point. The amicable reader will rejoice with me that, in spite of mutual shocks and encroachments, the three Orders of the State are preserved in salutary equipoise, although the mode of bringing this about has unavoidably changed with change of circumstances. The spirit of the Constitution remains unimpaired, nor have the essential parts of its frame undergone any alteration. May both endure as long as the Island itself![138]

Coleridge similarly supported the concept of a mixed and balanced constitution and, like Wordsworth, he completely revised his views on the usefulness of patronage and influence. He concluded that influence, far from being a corruption of the original constitution, enabled it to live in an organic form.

Coleridge's views on the aristocratic and democratic elements of the constitution have already been explored. After 1802 his toleration of those monarchs, who governed in the interests of their people, was to grow into real admiration. He regarded the king as an essential feature of the British constitution. He did not, however, favour any form of absolute monarchy and even opposed the creation of new peerages in Britain, as this would only enhance the power of the Crown at the expense of the hereditary nobility. A strong hereditary aristocracy was one of the best checks on monarchy.[139] Coleridge only favoured

the restoration of the Bourbons in France because it was a limited, constitutional monarchy, on the British model. During the war years, Coleridge developed a warm affection for the British monarchy and, particularly, George III. He believed that George had had a salutary effect on the nation's destiny. His sober dedication to duty had served as a moral exemplar to his people and had helped them avoid the evil temptations of the French Revolution:

> [of] all the subordinate Causes which acted in concert with the state of Property [in Great Britain] to counteract and disarm the temptations of the French Revolution at its commencement the King's own private character was, if not the first yet assuredly in the first class.[140]

Coleridge now saw George III, and the monarchy generally, as a virtuous, stabilising force in British society and politics.

In the war years, Coleridge developed an idea of monarchy that reached beyond its designated place within the constitution - he believed the monarchy was an expression of the national idea. When Fox visited Napoleon, in 1802, Wordsworth had condemned Fox's hypocrisy and the inconsistency in his, supposedly, libertarian principles. Coleridge condemned the action because it also did dishonour to George III and, ipso facto, to the British nation: the two were indissoluble. Coleridge argued that Fox, who had refused to appear at the British court, should have risen above party prejudice, or personal dislike for George III, when he was abroad, and should not have knelt before Napoleon. In slighting his own king, but honouring a foreign ruler, Fox was disgracing his nation, because the monarchy was part of the nation's idea of itself. An Englishman abroad,

> no longer knows the names of Whig or Tory. His king becomes an abstraction in his mind, around which his best feelings gather. It is the particular man no longer; it is the Majesty of his Country. What Mr. Fox could not receive in England, he ought to have been too proud a patriot to have condescended to receive in France.[141]

Monarchy had become the focus for the nation's patriotism and it was a moral inspiration. The king, himself, was only the outer manifestation of this deeper idea of the nation. The people themselves attained majesty through the idea of monarchy.

If the king was to fulfil this high calling, he had to be a positive

moral force, like George III, and he also had to achieve an identity of purpose and interest with his people, so that all became part of one national consensus. King and nation were indissolubly linked and achieved greatness through each other, although all were subject to God, the King of Kings.[142] Coleridge saw the entire nation as one family, made up of distinct members, but still organically united with the King and Queen as the parental figures. Just as parents achieved status and importance only through their family, so monarchs could not be considered apart from their nation. Similarly, the nation was dependent on them as exemplars, and guardians of its welfare. Coleridge argued that Queen Charlotte's funeral was much more important than normal funerals for this very reason:

> when in the person of the Departed the name and Majesty of the Country have been represented and, as it were, embodied - where a whole people may join in giving a religious tenderness to Royalty by combining with it the Parental Relation, and a majesty, not unparticipated by ourselves, to the tenderest of names, while our thoughts and hearts rise in concert with the Solemn Chaunt and the organ's swell over our ROYAL MOTHER.[143]

Just as parent and child only achieved full meaning when considered as part of one family unit, so the monarchy only found purpose when caring for its people, and the nation discovered its corporeal identity in the idea of monarchy. Nation and monarchy found themselves in each other.

Coleridge thus confirmed the monarchy as an integral element in the nation and as an important part of the mixed constitution:

> The reciprocal dependence of the Crown, the Aristocracy, and the minor proprietors, on each other, creates and preserves an unbroken chain of connexion between the great component classes of a civilised State, highly conducive to national union, tending moreover to soften and popularise the manners of the higher ranks, and to elevate the feelings of those below them.[144]

Thus, the nation, as an interdependent organism, was best realised in constitutional form, by the mixed and balanced structure of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. Like Burke, Coleridge believed that the entire nation was adequately represented in this arrangement. Although the common people had no direct voice in Parliament, none the less the interdependent nature of society and of the mixed constitution ensured

that, they possessed a great prudential, as well as moral, Interest in its welfare.'[145] Each element had to be cogniscent of the wishes and interests of the nation as a whole. Coleridge followed the Old Whig interpretation:

> By a constitutional House of Commons, the Old Whigs meant a body of men, fairly representing the various interests of the Empire, having themselves a weighty stake in the public prosperity, and existing in close sympathy with the public opinion.[146]

Coleridge argued that this balanced constitution, which involved the interests of all, produced just laws and sound policy. All the finest statesmen in British history had risen to eminence and had brought the nation to greatness because they had honoured this fine structure. Coleridge argued that Spencer Perceval had become such a successful Prime Minister because he had adhered to, and worked through, the balanced system of Britain's constitution:

> [He was] a man, who equally with our greatest Statesmen since the Revolution, had profoundly studied, and conscientiously acted upon, the balance of the constitution ... [and showed] a firm attachment to those principles and institutions religious and political, under which Great Britain had become the proudest name in history.[147]

The series of balances, inherent in the constitution of 1689, had proved to be a check on despotic ambitions and had produced wise legislation in the interests of all. The constitution was a self-righting balance, which was difficult to subvert and which was even capable of channelling personal ambition into the national interest through its mixed, but interdependent, structure. The constitution 'not only plants and rears the virtues, which it uses, but directs the coldest Self-interests to the public good.'[148]

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge concluded that the constitution could only function smoothly and effectively, if influence was employed. His philosophy of life predisposed him to any contrivance which would further the harmony of the whole. Whereas Wordsworth believed that the use of influence helped preserve the fixed constitution, Coleridge, on the other hand, believed that it was the lifeblood of the political system and thus helped it grow and live organically.

Coleridge praised the way that, in Britain, influence was not just centred on one person, the monarch, but was also distributed by the government and the landowning class as a whole. This wide use of influence was not corrupt, but was, indeed, a guarantee against corruption, for it ensured that no one element in the constitution predominated.[149] Coleridge did acknowledge, however, that influence could become disproportionately large. A few great aristocrats could control many boroughs at election time, but he believed that these few exceptions were worth the other advantages of influence: 'Yet the rule holds good, notwithstanding the exceptions.'[150] Removal of these few blemishes was hardly merited and might well damage the entire structure, thus ushering in a far more corrupt system. Coleridge believed that conservative defenders of the constitution should admit that some types of influence were evil, even though they still had to be accepted as parts of a successful whole. Honestly admitting this, could only strengthen their case:

> The most prudent, as well as the most honest mode of defending the existing arrangements, would have been, to have candidly admitted what could not with truth be denied, and then to have shown that, though the things complained of were Evils, they were necessary Evils; or if they were removable, yet that consequence of the heroic medicines recommended by the Revolutionists would be far more dreadful than the Disease.[151]

Although influence was a flawed system, it was still an intrinsic part of the constitutional organism. It was the best pragmatic means for ensuring the constitution worked so well.

The extent to which Coleridge's feelings on places and pensions had changed, is shown in his altered opinion of Burke's government pension. In The Watchman (1796),[152] he had scorned Burke for accepting this, although he had conceded that Burke possessed many talents and did merit some reward. Eight years later, Coleridge wrote of that same pension:

> Mr. Burke closed a long, a laborious, and an useful life in the affluence of a large pension - it could not be larger than his merits.[153]

Coleridge now regarded places and pensions as legitimate rewards for talent, although he did not countenance their use as a form of bribery or as a short-term means of buying support. Otherwise, he even

supported places and pensions when they had seemingly little practical value. Those positions, which entailed few important, active duties, could serve as rewards for past service, as well as present merit. They served as 'an asylum for superannuated or toil-worn service, and all of them to become rewards for such as had laboured long and jealously in subordinate stations'.[154] Thus, even in this more limited, passive sense, the system was pragmatic.

In general, however, Coleridge defended the use of patronage as a means for discovering, and raising up, the best man for each position. Coleridge attacked writers, such as William Cobbett, as well as the Whiggish newspapers, the Morning Chronicle and the Examiner, when they opposed the growth in civil and military patronage during the war years. Coleridge contended that the patronage system in the navy had produced great commanders such as Nelson, Howe and Hood.[155] When Whig writers argued that these men would have risen to eminence anyway, under a fairer meritocratic system, Coleridge countered by arguing that the patronage system was not a substitute for appointment by merit, but a means for bringing talent forth. It was essential to fill posts with men who had merit and experience, but Coleridge believed these qualities were often best discovered through the exercise of patronage. In a meritocracy the singular abilities and moral worth of such men might go unnoticed in the competitive struggle of mere talent:

> For the whole argument [of the reformers] rests on the assumption, that all interest is the substitute for ability and integrity, and not the pully to raise and lift them into office.[156]

Coleridge saw patronage as the handmaiden of merit and virtue, not an alternative to them. Indeed, since the good name of these patrons rested on the worth of their clients, this provided an added incentive for them to choose the best men for the post.[157]

Coleridge believed that the influence exerted within the bounds of the existing British constitution was the least corrupt of any comparable political system in an equally populous country.[158] He argued that this was only so, if influence was exercised by the most responsible class, and was employed for the welfare of the entire nation. Coleridge praised how the Old Whigs, who had framed the 1689

Revolution Settlement, had determined these limitations. They had distinguished,

> secret and selfish corruption from legitimate parliamentary interest; and while they held in abhorrence the influence obtained from accidents of personal favour, for selfish and transitory advantages, and with pledges of indefinite support, they justified and jealously maintained that influence in the disposal of patronage, which accrued to an individual as the representative of a fixed property and rank, and proportioned to that parliamentary interest, which by the nature of things attaches to such property with such rank.[159]

Influence exercised by the propertied classes was of benefit to the entire nation. Their link with the land and its traditions was a safeguard against the abuse of influence for personal gain or selfish ambition.

The place and patronage system therefore figures largely in Coleridge's defence of the constitution. In his view it enabled the political system to function smoothly and effectively, and produced legislators of the highest quality. It was a pragmatic system which had contributed to the universal admiration which the British constitution enjoyed. Coleridge, however, made even greater claims for the system. He argued that influence was the lifeblood of the constitution that enabled it to become an organic process. Influence was the vital element which kept all the distinct parts of the constitution operating as one harmonious body politic. Referring to'the Life and Spirit of our Constitution', Coleridge argued that,

> This delicate and difficult Result has hitherto been effected, and can only be effected by, the understood and (whenever allied with public opinion) the irresistible Influence of Parliament in the Sovereign's choice of his Ministers, by the complex system of acting Interests and Influences from the heart of the minutest capillary vessel, in which system the great Proprietors and the other powerful members of the two Houses are themselves only the larger veins and arteries and those nearest the head-outlets of Patronage.[160]

Influence thus maintained the organic life of the constitution. While each element retained its distinctiveness, influence ensured their interdependence. In this way, the operation of influence enabled the body politic to reflect the organic nature of society with all its

mutual duties and responsibilities. This ensured that the political and social system of Britain would function as one harmonious, living whole. For Coleridge, influence did not so much maintain the political balance, as infuse the constitution with organic life, so that it could live, grow and change, as society as a whole did.

Wordsworth and Coleridge were confident that this national constitution was perfectly fitted to the particular circumstances of British society and they believed that, in many respects, it was an ideal from which other nations could learn. In the 1810s, however, a more moderate radical movement began to revive and there were renewed calls for specific parliamentary reforms such as an extension of the franchise. Wordsworth and Coleridge had to respond to these demands for change in the traditional structure of the constitution. In the process, both writers also considered whether any major innovation could ever be justified or whether the constitution had reached a stage of perfection which only required occasional, minor adjustments to preserve its original framework.

In his early career Burke had not been opposed to parliamentary reform on principle, although he had been afraid of its practical consequences. After the outbreak of the French Revolution, however, he attacked the need for any major political reform. The French Revolution had demonstrated the dangers which would occur if new, alien elements were imposed upon the traditional fabric of the nation. Britain's time-honoured constitution had successfully preserved her from a similar descent into anarchy and despotism, and Burke argued that her political system should, therefore, be maintained 'in a condition of unchangeable constancy.'[161] Even though minor alterations might be required occasionally, as social circumstance demanded, these were only to be contemplated in extreme circumstances and in order to preserve the existing system. In general, the guiding principle had to be the 'ancient permanent sense of mankind'.[162] The deeper changes which the radicals desired were viewed as dangerous, destructive intrusions, alien to the traditional sensibilities which were natural to man. An extension of the franchise would only threaten the ancient fabric of society. The despotism of the masses which would eventually be produced, would be far worse than any previous despotism.[163] These Burkean arguments were to have a major influence on both writers, although Coleridge contended that there was a greater potential for

constitutional change than either Wordsworth or Burke had contemplated.

After 1802 Wordsworth gave up his earlier demand for democratic reforms within the constitution and began to argue that the British constitution had reached a degree of perfection in 1689 that precluded all but minor adjustments. In his Westmorland Address (1818), Wordsworth defended the existing system against contemporary attacks by moderate reformers. He attacked Brougham, the Whig candidate in Westmorland, because of his proposals for constitutional reform. Brougham had once supported the franchise for those paying any kind of tax, but now he had moderated his views and proposed a franchise based only on direct tax. Wordsworth first attacked this position because it was a desertion of Brougham's original principles. Wordsworth believed that the Whigs, generally, watered down their true beliefs to make them more palatable to the voting public. Wordsworth argued that contemporary Whig precepts were only a dilution of their old republican beliefs: 'no better than a timid plagiarism from the doctrine of the Rights of Man'.[164] Brougham's seemingly moderate proposals would soon lead to radical change and therefore they had to be opposed. A suffrage based on taxation was inimical to the traditional propertied basis of the constitution. Wordsworth argued that it was also better to have a few people enfranchised on a limited, but distinct, propertied basis (as at present), than have a few disgruntled people from the lower class, disenfranchised on a spurious, imprecise, innovatory basis such as tax. Wordsworth feared that a taxation suffrage would merely be the prelude to universal suffrage since all adults paid some form of tax. This would inexorably lead to the demise of the existing system and would be 'the greatest political evil that could befal the Land!'[165] Britain would be throwing away the very object she had fought the French to preserve - her established constitution. Thus, the moderate Whig calls for constitutional reform did not just have dangerous and radical implications, they were also fundamentally unpatriotic; they carried on Napoleon's evil purpose long after the war had been won.[166]

Wordsworth defended the propertied basis of the constitution. He argued that the law establishing the property qualifications for parliamentary candidates, which had been passed in Queen Anne's reign, was still a wise measure, since it ensured that M.P.s possessed a substantial stake in the country. He believed that the possession of

property acted as a surety for principled government: 'such Estate may be looked upon as a pledge for his conduct.'[167] Like Coleridge, Wordsworth came to the conclusion that the amount of responsibility one wielded in the political system, whether voting or governing, was directly proportional to the amount of property one owned.[168] Only a franchise based on property generated moral government. Only those who possessed property had the independence of judgement, the tangible interest in the nation's welfare, and the necessary education, to enable them to use their vote wisely and morally:

> The basis of the elective Franchise being property, the legal condition of eligibility to a seat in Parliament is the same. Our ancestors were not blind to the moral considerations which, if they did not suggest these ordinances, established a confidence in their expediency. Knowing that there could be no absolute guarantee for integrity, and that there was no certain test of discretion and knowledge, for bodies of men, the prudence of former times turned to the best substitute human nature would admit of, and civil society furnished. This was property; which showed that a man had something that might be impaired or lost by mismanagement; something which tended to place him above dependence from need; and promised, though it did not insure some degree of education to produce requisite intelligence.[169]

Whig reformers, such as Brougham, were urban outsiders trying to undermine the traditional, moral basis of the constitution by their proposals for a non-propertied franchise.

Thus, Wordsworth argued that the constitution had attained a state of pefection that required no further reforms, only minor adjustments. The potential for change was very limited. Like Burke, he argued that things had a fundamental right to remain unchanged until they had been proved either redundant or counter-productive. Change could only be contemplated as an act of conservation rather than destruction. The reformers of the 1810s lacked this natural reverence for things that existed. Wordsworth likened the constitution to a garden which was fixed in its general appearance, but which required constant tending and occasional changes or improvements to preserve its existing state. As a landscape gardener, himself, this metaphor seemed most appropriate to Wordsworth:

> You have heard of a Profession to which the luxury of modern times has given birth, that of Landscape-

> Gardeners, or Improvers of Pleasure-grounds. A competent Practitioner in this elegant art, begins by considering every subject, that he finds in the place where he is called to exercise his skill, as having a right to remain, till the contrary be proved. If it be a deformity be asks whether a slight alteration may not convert it into a beauty; and he destroys nothing till he has convinced himself by reflection that no alteration, no dimunition or addition, can make it ornamental. Modern reformers reverse this judicious maxim. If a thing is before them, so far from deeming that it has on that account a claim to continue and be deliberately dealt with, its existence with them is a sufficient warrant for its destruction. Institutions are to be subverted, Practices radically altered, and Measures to be reversed.[170]

Thus, for Wordsworth as for Burke, the constitution had a presumptive right to remain fixed and unchanged. Only minor improvements and adjustments which conserved this near-perfect whole could ever be contemplated. Even these minor changes were mostly to be abjured because Wordsworth believed they often led to more radical schemes.[171] The constitution was such an intricately balanced mechanism that even small adjustments might disrupt its inner workings.

Finally, Wordsworth considered the constitution and its potential for change, within a general philosophical view of life. Although he believed that mankind would continue to make some progress, he regarded the rationalist state of perfection to be unattainable.[172] In general, Wordsworth was convinced that man had reached something of a plateau in human achievement and endeavour. Although society would continue to produce great men, the very heights of intellect and virtue had already been attained in man such as Plato, Homer, Shakespeare and Milton. They had not achieved perfection, but they had reached 'as much of the divinity of intellect as the inhabitants of this planet can hope will ever take up its abode among them.'[173] In the same spirit, Wordsworth believed that the British constitution was as perfectly suited to national life as it could ever hope to be; although a few minor adjustments might be required in the future, a practical ideal had already been achieved. It combined the permanence of a fixed structure with the potential for small evolutionary changes within its elements. As such, it had reached a plateau of excellence.

Coleridge was also opposed to radical parliamentary reform in the

1810s, but he allowed for the possibility of greater structural change than Wordsworth would ever have contemplated.

Coleridge attacked radicals who wished to extend the vote to all adult males. He opposed this proposition because it was based on rationalist principles. Coleridge contended that abstract reason was a meaningless basis for any argument. Moreover, even if one accepted the rationalist premiss, one would then have to give the vote to women and children, who also possessed reason. Yet radicals had excluded these two groups from their proposals on the grounds that they were incapable of using their reason independently. Coleridge pointed out that the same could be said for the dependent classes of the poor and infirm, yet the radicals still proposed to enfranchise them.[174] Thus, both in its philosophical assumptions and in its practical inconsistencies, this radical argument for the reform of the franchise was false.

Coleridge also attacked the more moderate schemes for parliamentary reform that had previously been made by Major Cartwright and had been revived by other war-time writers. Cartwright's more pragmatic case was that, since laws were applicable to all, they should be assented to by all, and that people could only be happy if this rule were adhered to. Coleridge countered this argument, by reminding the readers of The Friend, that happiness was also dependent on one's condition of material comfort. If Cartwright concluded that people's happiness was dependent on an equal right to suffrage, then it must follow that they had an equal reciprocal right to personal possessions, wealth and property. Indeed, it was impossible to conceive of one without the other, Cartwright's ideas necessarily entailed an equalisation or communalisation of property, if they were to prove pragmatic:

> Here then is a legal power of abolishing or equalizing Property: and according to himself [i.e. to Cartwright], a Power which ought never to be used ought not to exist.
>
> Therefore, unless he carries his System to the whole length of common Labour and common Possession, a Right to universal Suffrage cannot exist; but if not to universal Suffrage, there can exist no natural right to Suffrage at all.[175]

Since an equal or communal distribution of property was impracticable for most countries, so was Cartwright's plan for universal suffrage,

for the two were interdependent. It should be remembered that Coleridge, in his pantisocratic phase, had once used the argument of interdependence for proposing the communalisation of property and the right of everyone to govern themselves. He had now clearly changed his mind.

Coleridge regarded universal suffrage as an abstract principle which, like any similar generality, was fundamentally unsuited to society because people did not act in abstract ways. As we have seen, even in America, where there was enough property to justify it, Coleridge believed that the imperfect people there could not fully accept universal suffrage. Like all universal principles, universal suffrage supposed the type of uniform, perfect subjects which were only to be found, in the Ideas of pure geometry and (I trust) in the Realities of Heaven, but never, never, in Creatures of Flesh and Blood'.[176] Coleridge claimed that even if he did support the idea of universal suffrage, he would still not have recommended it in present circumstances because the common people were too ignorant and passionate to use the vote wisely, and arbitrate on difficult issues.[177] If it were introduced, it could only lead to the vice-ridden, selfish governments which France had experienced in the 1790s. In general, he believed that universal suffrage had a tendency to represent all the worst aspects of human nature.[178]

Coleridge's opposition to universal suffrage on these philosophical and pragmatic grounds did not mean, however, that Coleridge was set against any extension to the franchise. He believed that, as society changed, so it was expedient to reflect these changes in political terms. These changes should occur gradually in the political system, however, just as they did in society. To ensure that they were responsibly engineered, Coleridge recommended that only the existing legislature should decide on the nature of the change. He attacked those reformers who tried to institute change by stirring up extra-parliamentary activity to put pressure on the legislature. A change in representation, forced on parliament in this manner, would fatally destabilise the constitution. Coleridge only admired,

> the men of property, who desire real improvements in the representation of the country adapted to the exigencies of the times, and who would leave the specific mode of effecting them to the wisdom of the Legislature.[179]

In this way, the organic relationship between social and constitutional change could be maintained in a responsible fashion.

It was not just the franchise, but the entire structure of the constitution, which had to have this potential for change. Coleridge believed that Britain had produced great men in her past and her constitution was well adapted to present circumstances, but he did not believe that the state had therefore reached Wordsworth's plateau of achievement and would only require a few minor adjustments. He had a more dynamic end in view: 'We are indeed better off than our fathers were; but for that very reason we should endeavour that our children should be better off than we.'[180] Coleridge did not believe the constitution needed to be returned to its original form of 1689, but he did recognise the constant need to make improvements and additions, and occasionally recover parts of the constitution abolished by oppressive governments. It was in this sense that Coleridge termed himself an advocate of political 'reform'. There had to be a constant renewal of the existing system which might entail merely the minor adjustments envisaged by Burke or Wordsworth, but which also might demand further-reaching changes and additions to the structure itself:

> we are believers in the expedience and practicability of what is meant by REFORM in many and important instances; though we think the word 'Reform' of lax and equivocal meaning, and in its proper sense of bringing back the Constitution to some form or state, in which it once existed, not only unjustified by the historic fact, but likely to mislead and inflame. We demand that which has been taken away from us forcibly or fraudulently, not without impatience, irritation, and discontent; while we recommend and ask for improvement and addition, whether it be a new buttress to the wall, or only a more secure lock to the pantry, with zeal and ernestness perhaps, but yet with temperance and a disposition to hear patiently whatever can be urged on the other side.[181]

Coleridge's idea of the constitution was of a system that drew from the past, but was not bound by it; there had to be the dynamic of growth and change. Even in The Friend, when Coleridge still argued that the constitution had reached an ideal form which only required the 'quiet duties' of a cautious gardener, it is significant that he used the metaphor of a 'growing tree' to describe the constitution.[182] Whereas Wordsworth envisaged the constitution as the formal structure

of a landscaped garden, with growing elements, Coleridge, on the other hand, saw it as a single, ever-growing, organism. Coleridge argued that, although the constitution was rooted in constant moral principles, its structure had to be in a continual state of change, reflecting the movement of society. If this did not happen, the constitution would cease to 'live' for the people. There had to be 'that Adaption to Circumstances, without which its' very Life becomes insecure.'[183] Although constitutional change had to occur gradually in order not to be destructive, it had to be a constant process in harmony with society. Moreover, there had to be the potential for major structural change as well as more particular adjustments. If the constitution failed to register changes in the ideas and social structures of the nation, both would perish:

> Preclude or suppress Innovation in the utterance and outward Correspondences, when the Innovation had already taken place in the mind, faith, and affections of a Nation - and you substitute Destruction. To prevent change you must kill or convulse.[184]

Change, whether of minor import, was not so much an occasional means of preserving the structure of the constitution, as a natural condition of its organic life. The constitution was not a fixed political form, but part of a social and political process.

In this process, the one constant was the Law of God, which underpinned all human laws. Just as God had constituted the world, so a political constitution was a means of re-uniting the people with God's Will, through their laws. The constitutive act of man was an analogue of God's: a means of attaining 'at-one-ness' with his Will.[185] The qualities of Reason, Religion and Will which God had invested in the body of man and society, should also be invested in the body politic. Both bodies thus formed part of one moral organism, and, through participation in this organic process, the moral nature of man, and of the state, were realised. They lost their separateness but discovered their reciprocal, though distinct, God-given capabilities:

> There exists in the human being, at least in men fully developed, no mean symbol of Tri-unity, in Reason, Religion, and the Will. For each of the three, though a distinct agency, implies and demands the other two, and loses its own nature at the moment that from

> distinction it passes into division or separation. The perfect frame of a man is the perfect frame of a state.[186]

The constitution of man and the state, invested with qualities by the constitutive Will of God were all part of one indivisible, interdependent organism, each realising and fulfilling their potential through each other.

Unlike Burke, Coleridge believed that permanence and change were not so much to be held in balance by the constitution as be part of the same organic, constitutional process. Coleridge's concept of the constitution was one that embraced change as a permanency; for as society was constantly changing so must the political system. The constitution could not simply respond to social circumstances when absolutely necessary, but had to become an interdependent part of them. The constitution could not be considered apart from the society it reflected and served, just as principles could not be abstracted from their operating circumstances, without losing their life and meaning. The constitution and national society, in their entirety and in their multeity of elements, found meaning through each other. Coleridge summed up his distinction between this idea of a totally organic constitution and that of a balanced system in an annotation to Shakespeare's Richard II:

> Should we be able to form a system of government, which should so balance its different powers as to form a check upon each other, and so continually remedy and correct itself, it would, nevertheless, defeat its own aim; - for man is destined to be guided by higher principles, by universal views, which can never be fulfilled in this state of existence, - by a spirit of progressiveness which can never be accomplished, for then it would cease to exist. Plato's Republic is like Bunyan's Town of Man - Soul, - a description of an individual, all of whose faculties are in their proper subordination and interdependence; and this it is assumed may be the prototype of the state as one great individual. But there is this sophism in it, that it is forgotten that the human faculties, indeed, are parts and not separate things; but that you could never get chiefs who were wholly reason, ministers who were wholly understanding, soldiers all wrath, labourers all concupiscence, and so on through the rest. Each partakes of, and interferes with, all the others.[187]

Coleridge's image of the constitution, therefore, was not one of a

balanced mechanism, where change merely helped to maintain the balance; it was an organism like man's own body, made up of distinct but interdependent organs and qualities, growing continuously and enlivening each other. The body itself was not fixed in permanency, because it too was part of the process; it grew and changed. Only this type of body politic could satisfy man's desire and need for intellectual and moral growth, as well as permanency, that was the right of all citizens.[188] This more dynamic vision of the constitution did not just entail the possibility of changes, great or small, but positively demanded them as a function of natural social growth. Coleridge argued that legislators had no moral right to rest easy with the constitution as it stood, they had to think constantly of the rest of changing society.[189] The permanent principles at the heart of the constitution could only live through continual (though evolutionary) change in their outward expression.

Wordsworth's model of the constitution had owed everything to Burke's. It was a fixed structure which allowed for change only in order to preserve the original balance of the system. In this way, it maintained life. Coleridge's model was more thoroughly organic. The constitution was not a structure, but an organic process; its elements were not balanced, but lived through each other interdependently; it embraced change not grudgingly, but as a constant condition of life; it was the more liberal, dynamic conception. Both men's ideas of the constitution were, nevertheless, fundamentally conservative. They acted to preserve moral values and principles and, even when countenancing change, were not innovatory in spirit. The rights which this national constitution should guarantee the subject and the duties it required of government and people, were all essentially traditional ends. Coleridge's idea of the constitution, as part of a social process, did lead him, however, to define these ends of government in a more dynamic fashion than Wordsworth or even Burke.

(c) The Ends of Government

The radicals of the 1790s had argued that governments were constituted to protect the natural rights of men more effectively than was possible in a state of nature. The more moderate reformers of the 1810s were content that governments should protect the rights which they believed had been guaranteed in 1689, but which, subsequently,

had been threatened or diminished. These rights included a wider franchise for the people. Conservative writers considered abstract rights to be meaningless and they believed the 1689 Revolution Settlement did not secure any further rights than were already guaranteed at present. They did believe, however, that certain rights were assured by the constitution and that these were accompanied by reciprocal duties. These rights were bestowed by the law of the land and were not inalienable. Burke argued that one's rights as Englishmen, as part of civil society, were far stronger and more practical than the abstract rights claimed by the radicals.[190] The existing constitution thus guaranteed those rights which were the normal benefits of traditional social life, and not of any pre-social state of nature; i.e., life, liberty and property, the right to live securely under law and order, the right to a share in the fruits of one's own industry, and some instruction in life. Burke regarded these as the real rights of man.[191] They were all pragmatic civil liberties defined and limited by the nation's traditional laws and guaranteed so long as they did not trespass on the rights of others. Governments were empowered to defend these, but not to extend them unnaturally beyond traditional social limits. They were not personal rights, such as the reformers advocated, but were part of the residue of social experience. Since they only had meaning within a social context, they necessarily involved duties towards the rest of society.

By the early nineteenth century Wordsworth and Coleridge had become convinced that the only meaningful rights were traditional, social ones. Coleridge scorned,

> the wild attempt to erect a government on the hypothetical rights of man, as a creature of nature, instead of his real and existing privileges, as a creature of society.[192]

He echoed Burke in claiming that anyone who attempted to substitute the abstract rights of man, for their national or civil rights as Englishmen, must be mad.[193] The only true rights were those guaranteed by the laws of the land and its propertied constitution. Similarly Wordsworth admired the way that the Spaniards eschewed a constitution based on abstract rights, for one which was based on their traditional social rights and liberties, even if this did entail their 'prostration' before Catholicism, that Wordsworth detested. This religious disposition

was, however, tolerable because it was part of their social experience and was not an abstract right:

> taught by the reverses of the French revolution, we looked upon these dispositions as more human - more social - and therefore as wiser, and of better omen, than if they had stood forth the zealots of abstract principles, drawn out of the laboratory of unfeeling philosophists. Finally, in this reverence for the past and present, we found an earnest that they were prepared to contend to the death for as much liberty as their habits and their knowledge enabled them to receive.[194]

The protection of these traditional, but pragmatic, rights, was the chief object of any constitutional system.

In The Friend (1809), Coleridge set out all the social rights which government was duty-bound to protect or promote. Wordsworth also subscribed to these ends of government and, indeed, the entire passage is reminiscent of a similar list of rights, outlined by Burke in his Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790).[195] Coleridge divided his list into negative and positive ends, since he argued that all governments were empowered not only to protect certain fundamental rights to which all citizens were already entitled, but also to promote rights which would aid the progress of the people:

> What are the ends of Government? They are of two kinds, negative and positive. The negative ends of Government are the protection of life, of personal Freedom, of Property, of Reputation, and of Religion, from foreign and from domestic attacks. The positive ends are, 1st to make the means of subsistence more easy to each individual: 2nd that in addition to the necessaries of life he should derive from the union and division of labour a share of the comforts and conveniencies, which humanize and ennoble his nature; and at the same time the power of perfecting himself in his own branch of industry by having those things which he needs, provided for him by others among his fellow-citizens; including the tools and raw or manufactured materials, necessary for his own Employment .. 3dly. The hope of bettering his own condition and that of his children ... (and lastly) the development of those faculties which are essential to his human nature by the knowledge of his moral and religious duties, and the increase of his intellectual powers in as great a degree as is compatible with the other ends of social union, and does not involve a contradiction.[196]

This important passage contains essentially the same rights which

Burke defended, although, as will be seen in Section III, Coleridge was to interpret the positive ends of government in a more progressive, liberal fashion than Burke or Wordsworth. Coleridge was, however, in agreement with Burke in arguing that these positive ends were only possible, if they harmonised with the rights of others. The prospects for bettering the condition of the people was dependent on this: 'a natural instinct constitutes a natural right, as far as its' gratification is compatible with the equal right of others'.[197] Coleridge was also convinced that the only means of ensuring this compatibility was through the rule of law. No rights were personal or absolute and so each had to be limited by law in order that it might be applied to the whole nation. In this way, these natural rights became civil rights which were more meaningful and pragmatic.[198] Coleridge argued that these civil rights, realised in a social context, carried attendant duties and had no real meaning without them; they were 'interdependent correlatives'.[199] Whereas the government had a duty to safeguard and promote the rights of its citizens, each person also had a duty towards every other member of society, which limited, but also gave life to, those rights. The ends of government were the promotion of civil rights which were not absolute or personal, but moral.

This extended passage in The Friend (1809), concerning the ends of government, was of such importance to Coleridge that he reprinted it twice in the following decade.[200] The passage also provides a framework for Wordsworth's views on the subject. In general, both writers believed that the existing political system well served the negative ends of government. The Lockean rights of life, liberty and property, as well as the security of law and order, were upheld and protected. The final plank in their defence of the national constitution rests on this premiss, and their arguments on these points will now be explored. As the Napoleonic War drew to a close, however, Wordsworth and Coleridge became more aware that the positive ends of government were not being pursued within the existing system. In post-war society, the constitution had been allowed to deviate from its positive ends, and the welfare of the people and their moral education was being neglected. Unless these ends were pursued, the other negative ends would soon also be in jeopardy. In Section

II, therefore, these two other ends of government will be explored. The pursuit of these more positive objectives led Wordsworth and Coleridge to formulate a more 'liberal' dimension to their conservative definition of the constitution.

In Section I, it was noted how Wordsworth and Coleridge attacked the type of unrestrained freedom favoured by the radicals, which was based on their natural rights philosophy. Thereafter, both writers had supported a concept of liberty, limited by law and traditional customs. Like Burke, they believed that liberty had to be limited in order to be possessed by all. The liberties guaranteed by the existing constitution were the only true, meaningful freedoms that the nation could expect or need. As the war against Napoleon deepened, Wordsworth and Coleridge began to emphasise the prime importance of national independence as a precondition of this freedom. For liberty to flourish, the traditional principles of the national constitution had to be protected, inviolate, from foreign or domestic attack. Thus, after 1802, Wordsworth and Coleridge became more concerned with preserving the security of the nation's political and social structure, than defending its liberties, since these were already defined and protected by the constitution. The independence of the country and the preservation of its constitution thus became synonymous with the right of freedom itself.

Wordsworth regarded the war against Napoleon as a contest to maintain national independence and liberty. Liberty was seen as a traditional, social right, enshrined in the country's laws and institutions.[201] The independence of the nation was, however, a vital precondition for liberty. Indeed, Wordsworth argued that even if civil liberties were denied by a domestic tyrant and the country remained independent of foreign domination, then the concept of liberty would still remain alive in the hearts and minds of the people. If the oppression came from without, this would be impossible. National independence at least guaranteed a degree of personal freedom which could not be snuffed out:

> For it is some consolation to those who look back upon the history of the world to know - that, even without civil liberty, society may possess - diffused through its inner recesses in the minds even of its humblest members - something of dignified enjoyment. But, without national independence, this is impossible. The difference, between inbred oppression and that which is from without, is essential; inasmuch as the former does not exclude, from the minds of a people, the feeling of being self-governed; does not imply (as the latter does, when patiently submitted to) an abandonment of the first duty imposed by the faculty of reason.[202]

Some social writers argued that even national independence was an inadequate bulwark of liberty if the people were so socially and economically dependent on the rich. Their material position therefore had to be improved. Wordsworth argued, however, that civil rights coupled with national independence constituted all the liberty that could ever be meaningful to man. Individual independence was unnecessary - indeed, it was impossible, since the whole of society was composed as one interdependent whole, where the liberties of every class were limited and conditioned by the rights of others. Indeed, Wordsworth argued that, in many respects, the rich were more dependent than the poor, for they relied on the latter to provide them with all the necessities of life:

> Superadd civil liberty to national independence; and this position [i.e. that of the radicals] is overthrown at once: for there is no more certain mark of a sound frame of polity than this; that, in all individual instances (and it is upon these generalized that this position is laid down), the dependence is in reality far more strict on the side of the wealthy; and the labouring man leans less upon others than any man in the community.[203]

In such an interdependent community the only true liberty was civil liberty, granted by the government and applicable to all. Individual, independent freedoms were impossible in such a society and only gave citizens a licence to do as they wished without regard for the customs, traditions, laws and moral values of the nation.[204] These social, legal and moral restraints did not deny liberty but accorded it practical definition.

In the post-war years, the external threat to freedom had

disappeared, but Wordsworth believed it now faced assault on the domestic front. The revival of radicalism, which threatened the existing structure of the constitution, was also, ipso facto, an attack on its traditional freedoms. To preserve liberty against this onslaught, Wordsworth advocated a temporary curtailment of civil liberties. Wordsworth regretted the need for the repressive Six Acts introduced by the government in 1819 after Peterloo, but he regarded them essential for the protection of the constitution and civil liberty: 'coercive measures have been resorted to, the unquestionable necessity for which, every friend of this country must deplore.'[205] Such a temporary suspension of liberties was vital for their future survival. In this manner, Wordsworth now defended the need for repressive measures, similar to the ones that he had once attacked during Pitt's Ministry in the 1790s. Liberty, being a civil right, granted by the constitution and protected by the government, was also liable to limitation, or even temporary suspensions, if domestic circumstances deemed it pragmatic. The end of government was to protect liberty not as an absolute right, but as a social right, defined by the constitution, but subject to expedience.

Coleridge also attacked the radical idea that freedom was an individual right, allowing man to do as he wished: this merely led to a selfish, licentious society.[206] Coleridge believed that freedom was a gift of God, although he was well aware that the doctrine of free will could be used by the radicals to support their interpretation of liberty. Therefore, Coleridge stressed that the free will had to be controlled. He asserted that Britain was fighting in the war to uphold 'the power of the insulted FREE-WILL, steadied by the approving CONSCIENCE.'[207] The free-will had to be restrained so that man could operate within a social context. Hence it was to be controlled by the conscience: a moral faculty which encouraged man to think of others and not just self.

Coleridge argued that the best way of realising this moral type of liberty, in practical form, was through the laws of the nation. When liberty was given practical meaning and life, through the laws and institutions of the nation, it also provided a foundation from which the other ends of government could develop. Although liberty was desirable in itself, it was to be valued chiefly, as a pre-

condition for all the other rights and advantages the state could offer. Coleridge, therefore, argued that the radicals were wrong to be obsessed with liberty as a personal right which overshadowed all others. The radicals had won over a young audience to their side, but Coleridge felt sure that conservatives, like himself, could still convince these 'young Enthusiasts' that,

> Liberty was not the only Blessing of Society, and though desirable even for its own sake, yet that it was chiefly valuable as the means of calling forth and securing other advantages and excellencies, the activities of Industry, the security of Life and Property, the peaceful energies of Genius and manifold Talent, the development of the moral virtues, and the independence and dignity of the Nation itself in relation to foreign Powers: and that neither these nor Liberty itself could subsist in a Country so various in its Soils, so long inhabited and so fully peopled, as Great Britain, without difference of Ranks, and without Laws which recognised and protected the privileges of each.[208]

Thus, liberty which accorded with the law, customs and structure of society, was a more practical concept of freedom. It also provided the circumstances, within which all the other ends of government could be achieved.

It should be noted that Coleridge believed that national independence was conditional on civil liberty. Both he and Wordsworth argued that freedom and national independence were vitally interrelated, but Coleridge believed that the former was the more necessary. A nation with civil liberty not only stood a better chance of defending its independence against oppression, but such a nation was also less likely to attack others:

> Happy will it be for Europe, if her governors shall at last perceive, that the more free a nation is, the less she will be disposed to conquest.[209]

National independence did help to maintain civil liberties, but Coleridge acknowledged that true, stable liberty would only be achieved when nations recognised the degree to which they were inter-dependent as well as independent. All the nations of Europe had to be seen as part of one organism in which each country had distinct features, but all were inter-related. Each nation necessarily had an effect on its neighbours: 'what injured any could be of real

advantage to none.'[210] The liberty of European nations would be more secure if they recognised this dictum. This did not entail an end to national rivalries, but merely a recognition that all nations were connected in one harmonious whole, which precluded animosity and confrontation. Each nation, like each citizen, had to respect the rights of others.

Coleridge, like Wordsworth, believed that the liberty of the nation was intimately dependent on the constitution for its practical form and protection, and on national security for its durability. If the constitution was threatened then so was liberty, for the latter had no meaning without the former. In the post-war years of discontent, Coleridge also became convinced that the constitution was in danger of being subverted by a domestic enemy - the radical revival. He believed that the radical press was partly responsible for stirring up this unrest among the people against their constitution. Coleridge regarded freedom as a civil right, not an absolute one, that was granted to the people and protected by the government. Coleridge therefore supported the government's right to curtail or suspend liberties so that the constitution might be protected from attack. Even though he had long been an advocate of press freedom, as a bastion of the constitution, he only supported its freedom of expression if it was used in a moral cause.[211] Regretfully, Coleridge now called for a censorship of the press to preserve the nation's freedoms:

> Alas! it is a hard and a mournful thing, that the Press should be constrained to call out for the harsh curb of the law against the Press![212]

Although he acknowledged the technical difficulties of distinguishing between good and evil newspapers, he considered the effort worthwhile. A temporary curb on freedom would ensure the protection of the constitution against radical attack, so that liberty could grow again, more securely, in the future.[213] Although civil liberties were defined by the constitution, it was the duty of government to achieve their practical realisation, and this sometimes entailed a modification or even a suspension of their original form, to fit current social circumstances. Like Wordsworth, Coleridge agreed that the protection of liberty was an important end of government,

but it was not a personal or absolute right; it was a civil right granted in accordance with expedience.

Wordsworth's and Coleridge's idea of the constitution was rooted in the hereditary ownership of property and so the protection of property rights was seen as another important end of government. The security of property ensured the stability of the social order, the rule of law and the preservation of the constitution with all its liberties. Until the Industrial Revolution had completely changed the economic basis of society and had eroded the power of landed elite, the reformers always found it difficult to counter this conservative defence of property rights. Even in the 1790s, very few radicals had attacked the concept of private property and inheritance, although some had favoured a fairer distribution of wealth. The need for government to defend property rights was, therefore, not just a conservative theory, but one that was almost universally subscribed to, even if reformers tended to support it as an individual right rather than as a support for the existing constitution.

Wordsworth believed that the government's protection of property rights was vital for maintaining the social and political status quo: 'security for property is the very basis of civil society.'[214] Although Wordsworth supported the rights of hereditary property-owning, he also argued that property was only held in trust by each generation. The land had been created by God and was given, in trust, to the landowners, as the custodians for the people:

> The land we from our fathers had in trust,
> And to our children will transmit, or die:
> This is our maxim, this our piety;
> And God and Nature say that it is just.[215]

This property, held in trust from God, involved moral duties as well as rights. Like Burke, Wordsworth believed that people in positions of power had to be impressed with the idea that they were duty-bound to act, in trust, for the people at large. Ultimately the labourers were, themselves, responsible to God, who had formed society and bestowed the means of their power upon them.[216]

Property rights thus involved responsibilities, just as the right to freedom had involved regard for one's neighbour's freedom. Landowners not only had political power, but also had to care

for their tenant's welfare in a just, considerate and industrious manner. Since these landowners possessed large estates and were much in the public eye, it was easier to scrutinise their behaviour and ensure they were performing their duties as well as enjoying their rights. In this way, voters could more easily decide who was fit for office:

> Extensive landed property entails upon the possessor many duties, and places him in divers relations, by which he undergoes a public trial. Is a man just in his dealings? Does he keep his promises? Does he pay his debts punctually? Has he a feeling for the poor? Is his Family well governed? Is he a considerate landlord? Does he attend to his own affairs; and are those of others, which have fallen under his care, diligently and judiciously managed?[217]

Property rights thus entailed duties to the community at large, and a submission to the scrutiny of the public to ensure that these duties were performed. For Wordsworth, property rights were not just the foundation stone of the constitution and the guarantee of all other social rights. They were also a wellspring of public duty. Thus, this end of government had a double value.

Coleridge also believed that one of the most important ends of government was the protection of property rights, since they underpinned the entire constitution. He argued that government itself had originally been formed to secure these rights: 'The chief object, for which Men first formed themselves into a State was not the protection of their Lives but of their Property.'[218] Coleridge defended the property rights of the landed classes not because they were inalienable, but because they were traditional to British society and had proved prag matic. He praised 'the uninjurious and useful privileges of our English Nobility.'[219] The political and social influence, which property-holding conferred, had proved to be useful to the country, ensuring government by those most fitted to rule.

Coleridge believed, however, that government was not just framed to protect <u>landed</u> property. British society was an interlinked organism where all classes and all types of property (whether landed, manufacturing, commercial or professional), were interdependent. The greatness of the nation was to be found 'in the interdependence of all classes, and of all modes of property on each other.'[220]

Although landed property was the most secure, and the landed classes were the natural ruling class, the other forms of middle class property were vitally linked to it and also guaranteed rights. The constitution, though primarily grounded in land, still safeguarded the rights of all these other interdependent types of property. The nation was strong against domestic or foreign attack, because of,

> the weight of Property, in a nation when the interests of the various Proprietors, landed, manufacturing, commercial, and professional, are vitally interlinked, and under a Constitution by the practice of which political Influence is paramountly grounded on Property.[221]

The constitution thus guaranteed, to each type of property, political rights. Even although the rights of landed property were the greatest of all, the landed classes were also dependent on the other classes in society, and each had reciprocal duties to perform. The greatest duty for all these propertied classes was towards the people who had no fixed property, but who, in an interdependent society, still had an interest in the welfare of the nation.[222] Everyone was cared for, even if the rights of property resided with only a few. Coleridge agreed with Burke in claiming that this created a strong, secure nation, for if property rights were more widely diffused, they would cease to be a reliable bulwark of the constitution. Government was therefore required to protect the property rights of the few who already possessed them, although Coleridge still maintained that men of talent should be capable of buying their way into property, with its attendant rights.[223]

In the post-war years, Coleridge believed that this relationship between property rights and the constitution was coming under attack. This will be further explored in Section III, but it should be noted here that Coleridge argued that the ends of government, and the ends of property, which were traditionally synonymous, were in danger of pulling apart, thus threatening the entire constitutional structure. Coleridge had argued that landed property was interdependently linked with commercial property, but that the two were still distinct. In the 1810s, however, Coleridge believed that the distinction of landed property was beginning to disintegrate as it became infected with the commercial spirit of capitalism, which he saw invading all spheres of human activity. Landowners were running their estates for personal profit, without attending to the duties which necessarily accompanied property

rights. It was the duty of government to prevent this development and protect traditional property rights and duties against the spirit of commercialism. The constitution depended on the matrix of social responsibilities which were a natural part of a state grounded in property rights; without this it would perish. Coleridge warned:

> That Agriculture requires principles essentially different from those of Trade, - that a gentleman ought not to regard his estate as a merchant his cargo, or a shopkeeper his stock, - admits of an easy proof from the different tenure of Landed Property, and from the purposes of Agriculture itself, which ultimately are the same as those of the State of which it is the offspring ... If the continuance and independence of the State be its object, the final causes of the State must be its final causes.[224]

Thus, for Coleridge, in the post-war years, the purpose of government in defending property rights as traditionally conceived, became a matter of some urgency as the spirit of capitalism pervaded the propertied classes and threatened to cut the interdependent relationship between the rights and duties of property, and the constitutional system.

The final, negative end of government was the protection of every citizen's right to live under the rule of law. The law was, itself, the reliable guarantee of all the rights already discussed. Conservative writers argued that, ultimately, the rights which government defended had to be legal rights and that absolute rights did not exist. All rights had to be limited by national law so that they were pragmatically attuned to the society which they served. Social rights were also more precise and permanent for being defined in law. They argued that the radicals' emphasis on absolute rights could only lead to anarchy as each person could then opt to do as he wished. Legal rights, emanating from the legislature, rather than the popular sovereignty of a volatile people, were the only reliable rights which could command the respect of all. For conservative writers, the rights of the individual could not be placed above the rule of law, without risking the dismemberment of society. Thus, one of the most fundamental duties of government was the defence of the rule of law.

For Wordsworth, the rule of law was essential for controlling man's will or passions and for giving him a moral purpose in life. Only through the defining process of the law, could man's natural qualities be channelled to good effect, and then he could begin to live a life of truth:

'Yet for the general purposes of faith
In Providence, for solace and support,
We may not doubt that who can best subject
The will to reason's law, can strictliest live
And act in that obedience, he shall gain
The clearest apprehensions of these truths,
Which unassisted reason's utmost power
Is too infirm to reach.[225]

A man who pursued his natural rights, without subjecting them to the limits of the law, could never achieve this level of distinct moral purpose, but was merely an anarchic, rudderless, animal. The rule of law provided the essential framework for all man's finest endeavours and, therefore, it was at the very root of the constitution. Its protection was one of the most important ends of government. Laws were so vital to society that they should be allowed to stand, protected by government, even when they were no longer immediately useful, so long as they were not positively injurious. 'Better it is that laws should remain till long trial has proved them an incumbrance, than that they should be too hastily changed.'[226] They had a presumptive right to remain and be protected. Respect for the rule of law was paramount and its defence was one of the government's most sacred duties, not to be relinquished until the laws had finally proved a liability.

Coleridge also believed that upholding the rule of law was a fundamental end of government. Man had formed governments to protect his property, but it was the rule of law which provided the stable framework within which this could be accomplished. The rule of law provided security for all the other rights which government guaranteed. The law gave form to the body politic and kept the organism in a coherent, yet growing, state. Properly constituted laws were limiting, but not in a restrictive way: they channelled the qualities and virtues of the individual and maintained him in a morally purposeful direction. Through a mixture of guidance and compulsion, it helped realise the potential in every individual. The rule of law compelled man to think of others in the social organism: this was not a negation of self, but, instead, it was a channelling of man's moral feelings which helped him discover his full identity through others. Only through national laws could men become distinct, yet also interdependent, parts of the state. Writing of the rule of law, Coleridge argued that,

> all, but the most abandoned men, acknowledge its authority, and that the whole strength and majesty

> of my Country are pledged to support it; and yet that for me its power is the same with that of my own permanent Self, and that all the Choice, which is permitted to me, consists in having it for my Guardian Angel or my avenging Fiend! This is the Spirit of LAW! The Lute of Amphion, the Harp of Orpheus! This is the true necessity, which compels man into the social State, now and always, by a still-beginning, never-ceasing force of moral Cohesion.[227]

The rule of law cemented the individual, society and the constitutional state into one coherent moral organism.

Coleridge argued that respect for the law stemmed from an innate sense of moral purpose. He disagreed with Hobbes's views that laws could only be effective, and permanent, if they rested on fear and force. Coleridge contended the opposite - that there could be no respect for laws if they were supported only through fear. Reversing Hobbes's dictum, he claimed that 'without the laws, the Sword is but a piece of Iron.'[228] The only effective, lasting laws were those founded on moral values. Coleridge believed that people only accepted Hobbes's view because they thought it applied to other people, but not to themselves. Most people believed that they themselves obeyed the law for moral reasons and Coleridge argued that what one claimed for oneself should also be applied to others. Thus, in protecting the right of everyone to live under the rule of law, government was also defending the collective moral purpose of the nation.

The most permanent, national laws were thus based on Christian principles and they attempted to realise these principles within specific social circumstances. God's Will was discoverable in the universal laws which governed all created life on earth, and these universal laws were then pragmatically adapted to each national organism by the particular laws of the constitution. In this way, Coleridge envisaged the entire world as one Divinely created organism, held together by the rule of law which was itself a practical realisation of God's Will. Laws thus formed the tissue which maintained the unity of the world and the interdependence of the parts and the whole. National laws maintained the structure of the body politic; just as they were reflections of God's laws which maintained the structure of the human organism.

> If then in all inferior things from the grass on the house top to the giant tree of the forest, to the eagle which builds in its summit, and the elephant which browses on its branches, we behold - first, a subjection

> to universal laws by which each thing belongs to the Whole, as interpreted by the powers of the Whole; and, secondly, the intervention of particular laws by which the universal laws are suspended or tempered for the weal and sustenance of each particular class, and by which each species, and each individual of every species, becomes a system in and for itself, a world of its own.[229]

In defending the right of everyone to live under the rule of law, the government was fulfilling its primary duty: protecting the very structure of the organism of all human life. Although the rule of law provided this framework, it too was subject to growth and change, like all the other social rights already discussed - by its participation in the organic process of the state. Once again Coleridge argued that the only constant in the constitutional process was the Law of God; this was the ultimate end which all governments had to defend.

Wordsworth and Coleridge thus completed their defence of the national constitution by claiming that it provided the best defence of these negative rights of the citizen guaranteed by government - liberty, independence, property and the rule of law. It also encouraged the reciprocal duties which each of these social rights entailed. As the war drew to a close, however, both writers perceived that the positive ends of government were not being so well defended or promoted; i.e. the right to social welfare and to moral and intellectual instruction. The existing political system, which they had defended so stoutly during the war, had neglected these areas of concern which seemed of increasing importance as a new industrial, capitalistic society began to emerge in the 1810s to supplant the old, interdependent world. Although they still defended the basic structure of the existing constitution, Wordsworth and Coleridge began to recommend modifications and changes to the system which would take account of the changes in the post-war world and which would ensure that the positive ends of government were not forgotten. These necessary alterations, which Burke had not anticipated, took Wordsworth and Coleridge beyond their conservative defence of the constitution and re-introduced, into their political philosophy, a degree of liberal thinking. The Burkean legacy of the war years had to be modified to meet the exigencies of a new type of society. This led Wordsworth to accept the existing constitution, but with a greater emphasis on the more liberal, positive ends of government;

it impelled Coleridge to promote an idea of the constitution as an organic process which, while basically conservative in form, was imbued with a more liberal dynamic of change.

SECTION III

CONSERVATISM MODIFIED, 1814 - 1818

CHAPTER VII:

POLITICAL ECONOMICS AND THE NEED FOR STATE INTERVENTION

> I seek wealth for the sake of freeing myself more and more from the necessity of taking trouble in order to attain it. The personal worth of those, whom I benefit in the course of the Process, or whether the persons are really benefited or no, is no concern of mine.[1]
>
> [Coleridge's characterisation of the employers' new laissez-faire attitude.]

The post-war world proved to be as disappointing, for Wordsworth and Coleridge, as the Peace of Amiens had been, more than a decade before. Both writers had believed that the nation experienced a moral renaissance during the Napoleonic Wars and that the conflict had united the people in a renewed sense of Christian purpose. Wordsworth and Coleridge were convinced that this more responsible spirit would continue to animate the nation after its final victory over the evil forces of Napoleon. Wordsworth had looked forward to a post-war world where traditional society would be re-established, with its old bonds of duty strengthened by the moral lessons of the war. Coleridge anticipated the final accomplishment of a truly organic society in which each class recognised its interdependence with the others, and all grew together as one great national consensus. As the war drew to a close, these hopes and assumptions were to be confounded.

In the 1810s the nation was again beginning to fracture. There was a great revival of political unrest and radical agitation, not seen since the 1790s. The Whigs and the radical reformers had, at their disposal, some of the most forceful writers and politicians of the age, such as Francis Burdett, William Cobbett, Henry Hunt, Jeremy Bentham, William Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Lord Byron and P.B. Shelley. Although they were not of one accord, they did all wish to see a measure of change in the structure of politics which Wordsworth and Coleridge had defended. Apart from the Poet Laureate, Robert Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge remained the most famous exponents of the conservative case. They also had to contend with a rising chorus for reform in the country at large.

Between 1811 and 1813 there were widespread Luddite disturbances in the North of England. These were mainly protests over new machinery and economic conditions, but they also involved a degree of political disaffection.[2] These popular demands for economic and political change were to increase in the post-war era, as social distress became more evident. The disturbances greatly alarmed Wordsworth and Coleridge. They realised that the unity, established by the war, had been much more ephemeral than they had anticipated. Once the moral imperatives of the national struggle against France began to loosen, they perceived the evils of 'Jacobinism' beginning to revive. The return to the traditional, moral values of the existing constitution now seemed less profound; more a result of circumstance.

In many ways Wordsworth and Coleridge reacted to the unrest as their fellow conservatives did. They supported the Liverpool Administration and blamed much of the popular discontent on the Whigs and their attempts to stir up the people against the government. Wordsworth and Coleridge also believed that radical activities posed a real threat to public order and discipline, so they supported the government's repressive measures, such as the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in 1817.[3] The two writers, however, did not consider these measures to be adequate solutions to current problems, and they departed from the conservative case in several important particulars. Firstly, they were much more convinced that real economic and social grievances did exist. These were growing with the spread of industrialisation, and were not just exaggerated by Whig politicians for their own self-interest. Secondly, Wordsworth and Coleridge believed that some of the middle and upper classes were partly responsible for this distress. By the 1810s many businessmen and employers had become infected by the commercial spirit of the new system of political economy and they now pursued profits at the expense of their old responsibilities and duties towards their workers. This new spirit created great material hardship for the people; it weakened the old moral ties which had bound the nation into a unity; and, since the constitution was based on moral principles, Wordsworth and Coleridge believed this materialist spirit was politically subversive. Lastly, the two writers argued that these real and growing problems could only be tackled by state intervention to secure the physical and moral well-being of the people. There had to be a much greater emphasis on the two positive ends of government: social welfare

reforms and moral education. While most conservatives argued that social reforms would only be seen as a sign of weakness by the people and lead to revolution, Wordsworth and Coleridge argued that a gradual reform of the people's conditions was the only way to avoid revolution. The exigencies of wartime had obscured the need to pursue these positive ends of government. As the conflict ended and a new, harsher industrial society began to emerge, Wordsworth and Coleridge believed that there had to be a much greater provision, in the constitutional system, to ensure the social and moral welfare of the people. In a society in which the bonds of responsibility were beginning to unravel, there needed to be a more formal intervention by the state itself, to ensure that social duties were still fulfilled and that the constitution continued to live and work for all its citizens and not merely the ruling class.

This did not mean, however, that Wordsworth and Coleridge had returned to their old radical sympathies; their political philosophy was still fundamentally conservative. They proposed only gradual changes which were primarily designed to enable the existing constitution to function more effectively and which were to be implemented by the ruling classes. Nevertheless , they did venture beyond the contemporary conservative defence of the constitution as it already existed, and argued for a much more humane, and socially aware, political system. For Wordsworth, state intervention would enable the traditional principles and structure of Britain's constitution to be preserved in the changed circumstances of the post-war world. In Coleridge's more organic view, he could see how state intervention would conserve traditional principles, but he could also perceive the potential for future changes in the constitutional structure as the state tried to find new ways of expressing these time-honoured verities.

In this chapter, the first of these positive ends of government will be examined - the need for social welfare. Wordworth's and Coleridge's diagnosis of post-war grievances will first be explored and then their advocacy of state intervention.

Wordsworth and Coleridge argued that there were two important sets of causes which accounted for post-war distress and unrest: those associated with poverty and those associated with the new industrial changes. Both of these threatened the stability of the state.

Poverty was a continual concern for Wordsworth, but by the 1800s he had come to the conclusion that the poor would always be a feature of society. God had ordained their lowly situation, but had also granted them some consolations.[4] Wordsworth often adopted a rather sentimental view of the poor, seeing them as a group of essentially happy people, untramelled by the cares of more complex living.[5] Although rural poverty could be harsh, the countryside still fostered a moral spirit which was absent in the dislocated lives of the city poor and this offered some compensation for their physical sufferings.[6] Indeed, Wordsworth regarded the stoicism, with which the poor bore their lot, as a source of moral inspiration for the rest of society.[7] Nevertheless, Wordsworth still acknowledged that there was much abject poverty, even in the countryside, that could be ameliorated, if not entirely eradicated. He noted that many Lake District tourists marvelled at the picturesque country cottages of the poor, but Wordsworth admonished them for not looking deeper and feeling, more profoundly, for the suffering which was concealed there:

> Think what the Home must be if it were thine,
> Even thine, though few th y wants! - Roof, window, door,
> The very flowers are sacred to the Poor.[8]

What seemed quaint, was in fact a sparse home, where few of these admiring tourists would ever have wanted to live themselves. In this way, Wordsworth could still penetrate the surface charms of poor life and show the hardships which were masked. Moreover, in this world, where even insignificant objects, such as flowers, were sacred objects, Wordsworth was attempting to impress on his readers that even the smallest acts of charity would have a disproportionately beneficial effect. Thus, although Wordsworth agreed with Burke that the poorer classes were a permanent part of society,[9] he believed that their situation could be alleviated in a paternal way and that this was a duty incumbent on all the ruling classes of society.

As the war drew to a close, it was this aspect of poverty which troubled him most. Poverty was not so much increasing, as not being

properly treated. The old individual acts of charity, and the paternal interest in their plight, were beginning to evaporate and the conditions of the poor seemed to be ignored. Wordsworth isolated a number of new factors which had produced this situation:

> I am aware how much universal habits of rapacious speculation, occasioned by fluctations in the value of produce during the late war - how much the spread of manufactories and the baleful operation of the Poor Laws, have done to impair these indigenous and salutary affections.[10]

These developments had broken the old bonds of responsibility that the leaders of society had always shown towards the poor. Instead of caring for the poor in the natural way of the past, employers now used their workers as units of production and paid them little so as to maximise profits.[11] Their duty to care for the poor was forgotten. The Poor Law had replaced the more natural offices of charity and the paternal concern which had been part of traditional society. Through all these various developments, the duties and responsibilities of the ruling class were either being eroded or side-stepped. These factors explained the additional distress which the poor suffered in the 1810s, although Wordsworth acknowledged that matters were also worsened by the great increase in population. He argued, however, that a population rise could have been a boon to the nation if only the people had been properly cared for and educated. In The Excursion (1814) he attacked Malthusian fears of over-population and contended that a larger nation could yet lead to increased wealth, as well as provide the empire with colonists who would spread Britain's moral values all over the world.[12]

Thus, Wordsworth argued that poverty caused so much more distress in the 1810s because the poor were not cared for in accordance with their habitual right. The poor had become the first victims, as the moral bonds of the old society began to disintegrate. The presence of such a large, distressed and increasingly alienated class of people was alarming for Wordsworth. Although he accepted poverty as an inevitable fact of life, the new ways in which the people were treated in the 1810s, meant that the problem of poverty no longer had a localised effect only on the poor, but also endangered the moral cohesion of society and the state. Instead of binding the nation together in collective responsibility, the new treatment of the poor promised to tear the nation apart and so also endanger the constitution. It was obvious to

Wordsworth that government would now have to intervene to ameliorate the condition of the poor and repair the old bonds of responsibility on which society depended. This was now one of the most important ends of the state. Wordsworth advocated government,

> by just dealing towards all orders of the state, so that, no members of it being trampled upon, courage may everywhere continue to rest immovably upon its ancient English foundation, personal self-respect; - by adequate rewards, and permanent honours, conferred upon the deserving.[13]

Until the poor received more adequate wages and were cared for responsibly, they would continue to become a brutalised and alienated group. They would also be more easily stirred up against the government by the self-interested radicals and Whig Opposition. Thus, to preserve the harmony and cohesion of the traditional social and constitutional structure, Wordsworth recommended state intervention to help the poor, rather than measures to repress them.

Coleridge's analysis of the growing distress of the poor in the 1810s was more detailed, and more profound, than Wordsworth's. As early as 1795, Coleridge had recognised the need for all the people to be adequately cared for, otherwise their moral health, as well as their physical condition, would be imperilled.[14] Nevertheless, his diagnosis of the nature of poverty was to change as his political philosophy became more conservative. In Conciones and Populum (1795), Coleridge had urged that people 'should plead for the Oppressed, not to them.'[15] When he used a variant of this phrase, in 1814, the change is significant: now he advocated 'pleading for the poor and ignorant, not haranguing to them'[16] The concern for their well-being is still evident, but he no longer believes the people's distress was caused by government oppression, but by poverty and a lack of education. The problem for the people was now identified as moral and economic, rather than political.[17] Their exploitation was to be at the hands of employers not government.

Thus, when Coleridge investigated the rise in popular distress and unrest in the 1810s, he was anxious to exonerate the government from responsibility. The Opposition claimed that the government was to blame for the poverty of the people. William Cobbett argued that the war had caused needless expense. He claimed that people objected to rises in the Poor Rate when, in fact, this was necessitated by the poverty caused

by high government expenditure, an enlarged war-time bureaucracy and government corruption.[18] Coleridge argued that there had not been a disproportionate rise in government places and that they were superfluous to the controversy on the real causes of poverty.[19] He believed that the issue was only being raised as a pretext to attack the government. Indeed, Coleridge contended that Britain had fared well, economically, because of the war and that artisan wages had risen.[20] He was convinced that the standard of living was higher in Britain than in other countries, including America, and that even agricultural labourers were better off.[21] Coleridge also attacked Cobbett's claim that the high taxes needed to pay for the war, and to finance sinecures, were a major cause of distress. Coleridge argued that the level of tax was unimportant; what mattered most was the sum of money left to each individual after tax had been deducted.[22] He asserted that, looked at in this way, most people did have sufficient to live on after being taxed; though Coleridge conceded that the current tax system did tend to favour, too much, those who were already rich, rather than those who were most productive. The abolished Income Tax had been a fairer system.[23]

Coleridge contended that Cobbett and the Whigs were deliberately, and falsely, blaming the government for the current level of poverty, in the hope of gaining political advantage. He also accused the Opposition of exaggerating the sufferings of the poor in order to turn people against the government. Instead of their pretended sympathy for the poor, the Whigs were 'well-wishers only to the continuance of their miseries.'[24] They realised that the longer people were in misery and were kept complaining, the greater was the likelihood of the nation turning to the Whigs as the only alternative government. In 1811 Coleridge argued that the Whigs had exaggerated the bread shortages and blamed them on government-backed monopolies. Bread riots occurred, as a result, in Nottingham when, in fact, Coleridge claimed there really had been a shortfall in the harvest. Using the ignorance of the poor, the Whigs had stirred up discontent for their own political ends:

> They would, without remorse, convert an increase of price into absolute dearth, in the hopes of goading ignorance into riot, and snatch the last morsel from the poor man's lips in order to make him curse the Government in his heart.[25]

The only point on which Coleridge and Cobbett agreed in this debate,

was that the ordinary people were misguided in blaming the new machines for their distress and unemployment. Both writers agreed that, although causing initial dislocation, the new machinery would create work and bring the nation prosperity.[26]

Nevertheless, the subversive actions of the Opposition did not preclude the presence of real grievances in the 1810s. It is at this point, as with Wordsworth, that Coleridge departs from the normal conservative diagnosis of post-war problems to acknowledge that the poor had real and growing reasons for their suffering. Even when Coleridge agreed with conservatives that the poor were often improvident in their use of money, he was careful to emphasise that this was not a cause of their poverty, but a symptom of it. They were so desperate in their hardship that they would seize on any gratification as some kind of respite.[27]

Although Coleridge did not believe that the war itself was to blame for increased poverty, he did argue that the awkward transition from war to peace had caused problems. Coleridge was one of the first modern political writers to recognise that such periods in a nation's history were often times of social and political dislocation, with economic booms and slumps.[28] The transition to peace had resulted in the discharge of soldiers and the run-down of war industries which had led to high unemployment and poverty. These factors were also being experienced by the other nations in Europe and the total effect was a spiral of depression:

> For it may easily happen, that the very same change, which had produced this depression at home, may from equivalent causes have embarrassed the countries in commercial connection with us. At one and the same time the great customer at home wants less, and our customers abroad are able to buy less. The conjoint action of these circumstances ... cannot but occasion much distress, much obstruction, and these again in their re-action are sure to be more than doubled by the still greater and universal alarm, and by the consequent check of confidence and enterprize, which they never fail to produce.[29]

In this important passage, Coleridge again displays his acute appreciation of economic change by describing the action of a depression, in its modern sense, as an inter-linked sequence of economic difficulties which produces accumulating decline. This post-war depression was

especially traumatic because it followed a period of unparalleled innovation and growth. Coleridge rightly regarded it as an important cause of poverty and distress. He believed that the only way of escaping this spiral of depression was through an act of moral will.[30] The government was best placed to intervene and instil this new sense of purpose, as well as help the poor who had had to bear the brunt of the depression.

Coleridge concluded this Lay Sermon analysis of poverty by emphasising that it was not the action of any one of these factors that was vital, but the interraction of them all. By introducing false grievances into an already critical situation, the Whigs had added disproportionately to the general suffering. They had further demoralised the poor by suggesting that the causes of their hardship were unnecessary and could easily be removed by government.[31] Coleridge's own analysis of the causes of poverty was complex and, in many respects, far-sighted. He considered a blend of economic, social, political, moral and psychological factors, real or exaggerated, which all worked in concert to produce a whole of suffering greater than the individual parts. Although he did not side with the radicals, he was equally critical of the conservatives for failing to recognise the true grievances of the poor and ignoring their need for help. These sufferings had become particularly acute in the new post-war world and he urged government to help them. He was concerned to enlarge the social vision of conservative writing and was anxious that fellow conservatives should feel for the poor, recognise the extent and depth of hardship in British society and realise that this poverty was not self-induced:

> Alas! I have more than once seen a group of children in Dorsetshire, during the heat of the dog-days, each with its little shoulders up to its ears, and its chest pinched inward, the very habit and fixtures, as it were, that had been impressed on their frames by the former ill-fed, ill-clothed and unfuelled winters. But as with the Body, so or still worse with the Mind. Nor is the effect confined to the labouring classes, whom by an ominous but too appropriate a change in our phraseology we are now accustomed to call the Labouring Poor.[32]

Adam Smith, whose writings Coleridge despised, had coined the phrase 'the labouring poor'.[33] Burke had criticised the use of this term by arguing that only those incapable of labour and earning their own living,

could be described as 'poor'; the rest were improvident.[34] In accepting the term here, Coleridge seeks to remind fellow conservatives that the term is now sadly appropriate. For in the post-war world, workers and paupers were no longer naturally exclusive groups. Poverty was not a function of improvidence, as conservatives argued, but an affliction suffered by many industrious, responsible workers. In this way, Coleridge tried to widen the scope of conservative thinking into more liberal channels.

Wordsworth and Coleridge also identified other, more general, changes in British society that contributed to the suffering of the people. These were the forces of industrial change, urbanisation and the new spirit of capitalist enterprise, which had all been developing for some time, but the full effect of which was now to be experienced in the 1810s. Wordsworth and Coleridge argued that these new forces created physical hardships for the people and lowered their moral spirit and sense of values. They also believed that the Industrial Revolution, unless it was regulated, had revolutionary, political implications. By challenging and disrupting the traditional moral values and the interdependent social structure of Britain, it could threaten the constitution of the state which was based on these. These new economic developments had not been so noticeable in the time of older conservative theorists, such as Burke, and, therefore, in analysing these changes and advocating state reforms which were still consistent with constitutional principles, Wordsworth and Coleridge were widening conservative theory to meet the challenges of a new era.

For Wordsworth, rural life was the most natural type of existence and, consequently, he was horrified by the increasing urbanisation of British society. Country life preserved all the domestic values which Wordsworth revered. Despite its many hardships, a life lived in the midst of nature still had the power to soothe and inspire.[35] Its consoling powers were needed even more urgently in the troubled 1810s than at any other time. In the interdependent rural communities, all the people were linked together by reciprocal bonds of duty and interest and, no matter how hard life became, they still had the moral support which was natural to the country villages.[36] Townspeople had no such consolations.

London was still the only city that Wordsworth respected. This was because it had a long history and its environs spilled out into the countryside, admitting a few of the benevolences of nature.[37] Even when he showed appreciation of the city's centre, it was often because it reminded him of natural scenes. Thus, the great, deserted, snow-covered roads around St. Paul's recalled, to his mind, the fields of the countryside.[38] The city was rarely judged on its own terms and, as it expanded, Wordsworth found even less to admire. London, like all cities, now appeared to have little real depth or substance to its life, unlike the countryside with its rich traditions and profound values:

> A man is supposed to improve by going out into the World, by visiting London. Artificial man does; he extends with his sphere; but alas! that sphere is microscopic; it is formed of minutiae, and he surrenders his genuine vision to the artist.[39]

The famed cosmopolitan breadth of London was, in fact, shallow and valueless, and lacking in the spiritual depth of the countryside. London society was vain and self-interested and, Wordsworth argued, it was, therefore, an appropriate place for the devious politicking of the radicals to flourish.[40] Indeed, Wordsworth associated urban society, generally, with the new growth in radicalism; he believed it was the natural breeding ground for false, subversive doctrines.

The new cities of the industrial age worried Wordsworth even more than London. They lacked its few redeeming qualities for they had no history and they were vast blights on the landscape, where nature had no admission. They were dark, gloomy, man-made monsters, without even London's noble structures to lift the spirits. They were thus the antithesis of Nature; they were rapidly destroying the countryside and its traditional lifestyle. These new cities were guilty of 'hiding the face of earth for leagues.'[41] They brutalised natural feelings and alienated one class from another so that the old interdependence of all ranks of men in one community was broken. Neighbourhoods now divided classes, rather than brought them together in one whole. Man became so isolated that not even God was there.

> he truly is alone,
> He of the multitude whose eyes are doomed
> To hold a vacant commerce day by day
> With objects wanting life - repelling love;
> He by the vast Metropolis immured,

Where pity shrinks from unremitting calls,
Where numbers overwhelm humanity,
And neighbourhood serves rather to divide
Than to unite. What sighs more deep than his,
Whosenobler will hath long been sacrificed.[42]

Urban life destroyed all the old links, moral responsibilities and social relationships of traditional existence. The result was not the solitary, spiritual communion between God and man, but alienated a-social man; the very antithesis of the idea of social man on which the whole of Wordsworth's political philosophy was based. Thus, Wordsworth feared the force of urbanisation not merely as an evil, alternative to rural life, but as its rival and destroyer. Unless the growth of cities could be curtailed and traditional moral values be re-asserted there,[43] they would break the entire social and political structure of Britain.

The vast horror of these new cities had been occasioned by industrial changes within the economy, and these, Wordsworth abhorred. His attention was first caught by the transition from the old domestic system of textile manufacture to the new factory system. The old method of spinning and weaving had been done in the home and had involved all the family. This had served to unite the family and sustain those domestic values that Wordsworth considered to be central to traditional life. Moreover, the trade was an integral part of rural existence. Now, Wordsworth lamented the decline of this trade and all the values it encapsulated:

The pastoral muse laments the wheel - no more
Engaged, near blazing hearth on clean-swept floor,
In tasks which guardian angels might approve
Friendly the weight of leisure to remove,
And to beguile the lassitude of ease;
Gracious to all the dear dependencies
Of house and field - to plenty, peace and love.[44]

The spinning wheel was soothing: man and machine became one, and there was a pride and pleasure in the work. It was a harmonious part of natural life that helped to while away some leisure hours. This rather sentimental notion of a subsistence trade, nevertheless, reveals how Wordsworth believed a machine should only be tolerated when it became an integral part, and served the time-honoured values, of rural life.

The great machines of the new factories, however, destroyed this

harmony and all the values associated with it. In The Excursion (1814) Wordsworth remarked on how the new industries pitted man and machine against each other:

> I have tried to mark
> A new and unforeseen creation rise
> From out the labours of a peaceful Land
> Wielding her potent enginery to frame
> And to produce, with appetite as keen
> As that of war, which rests not night or day,
> Industrious to destroy.[45]

The machines which powered these factories were not the servants of man; they had become their masters, their god. Although the war against Napoleon had been won, machines were now waging an even more dangerous war against traditional British life and values.[46]

Wordsworth did emphasise, however, that he was not opposed to the new technology itself. Wordsworth had always been interested in scientific discoveries. He owned his own microscope and was a friend of the inventor, Humphrey Davy. Wordsworth believed science could broaden the scope and interests of man's mind and develop his faculties to the full. It was 'a support/Not treacherous, to the mind's excursive power.'[47] The discoveries and inventions of science were only valuable assets, however, as long as they served 'the cause/Of order and distinctions.'[48] Wordsworth was, therefore, not opposed to the new machines if they served traditional rural society, only if they challenged its structure and values. It was the manner in which the machines had been used which most troubled Wordsworth.

Wordsworth detested the factory system because of the incessant, spiritually-numbing work it required of people. The system treated its workers as mere tools in the mechanical process, rather than as human beings. The unremitting toil of the factory brutalised the people, destroyed their health and crushed their moral spirit. The natural rhythms of life had been replaced by the tyranny of factory shift work, continued all through the night.[49] The normal flow of village life governed by Godly Nature had been superceded by the unnatural, regimented life dictated by the new machine-gods. Man was sacrificed on the altar of Industry and Profit:

> Our life is turned
> Out of her course, wherever man is made
> An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool

> Or implement, a passive thing employed
> As a brute mean, without acknowled g ment
> Of common right or interest in the end;
> Used or abused, as selfish may prompt ...
> ... - Not for these sad issues
> Was Man created; but to obey the law
> Of life, and hope, and action.[50]

In these circumstances, man's moral nature was traduced. Pride in one's work, moral thoughts, self respect, and all finer feelings, were obliterated by the factory system. As these values were destroyed so would be the constitution which was dependent upon them.

Wordsworth argued that old moral values were being replaced by a new set of vulgar, material values based on profit and self-interest.[51] He believed that the person most responsible for this change was Adam Smith. His false philosophy of political economics had been adopted by employers, and even some landowners. As a result, the new machines which were potentially useful, had been introduced extensively, in a laissez-faire spirit, with a care only for increasing profits, not serving the people. Wordsworth did acknowledge that Smith and his followers, had intended to make the nation more prosperous, but their system had only enriched the few at the expense of the many. In The Prelude (1805) Wordsworth attacked 'statists' (or political economists) such as Smith. He discovered,

> Ambition, folly, madness, in the men
> Who thrust themselves upon this passive world
> As rulers of the world - to see in these
> Even when the public welfare is their aim
> Plans without thought, or bottomed on false thought
> And false philosophy; having brought to test
> Of solid life and true result the books
> Of modern statists, and thereby perceived
> The utter hollowness of what we name
> The wealth of nations.[52]

The last line, which alludes to the title of Smith's book, is used ironically by Wordsworth to emphasise his point that while the nation's total wealth, in material terms, may have risen, this wealth was concentrated in a few hands only. Smith's theories had increased the material wealth of a few employers, but the welfare of the nation as a whole, both material and moral, had been neglected in the process. This empty, morally bankrupt philosophy with its new religion of Profit had overturned all social virtues. Wordsworth argued that now material possessions conferred dignity and worth, rather than solid moral qualities:

- We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us.[53]

In particular, Wordsworth lamented the loss of the simple, moral life which had flourished in England in the seventeenth century, and which he had believed would be revived after the war was over. The new laissez-faire economic system eroded these domestic values and destroyed family life. Wordsworth regretted the disappearance of,

The old domestic morals of the land,
Her simple manners, and the stable worth
That dignified and cheered a low estate.[54]

Homes were deserted for factories, and there was little time for communal family life. Children were forced out to work, away from their parents' influence; their health was ruined and their senses prematurely dulled.[55] Thus, the traditional family unit was beginning to fragment and Wordsworth believed that, as this happened, the whole social and political fabric of the nation would also begin to unravel. The combination of urbanisation, industrialisation and the new laissez-faire attitudes thus posed a serious threat not only to the moral and physical health of the nation, but also to its inter-linked social structure and balanced constitution. These were subversive forces and Wordsworth was to recommend that the government, as the only responsible agent left, had to address itself to the social welfare of the nation. This was not only a humanitarian duty and an end of government, but it was also a necessary measure to preserve the social and political state.

Coleridge accepted urbanisation and industrialisation more readily than Wordsworth, but he was even more opposed to the excessive commercial spirit which had poisoned the mind of the nation. Rural life was not central to Coleridge's existence, even though he valued it greatly. He believed that town and country were complementary, not antagonistic, parts of the social organism; each had distinct qualities. He was much impressed by the way in which the Germans had been able to introduce aspects of nature into their towns, with little parks and tree-lined streets.[56] This was an inter-fusion of town and country, which he believed could be emulated in Britain. It combined the natural growth and virtues of Nature, with the shaping hand of man. Although Coleridge was distressed by the new industrial cities of Britain, he accepted them

as part of the new emerging society and only wished for their improvement. He did not concur with Wordsworth that the only true society was rural, and that industry should only be tolerated if it served that society. Coleridge argued that industrialisation, and the cities it spawned, had a validity of their own, even if there were severe flaws which had to be rectified.

Coleridge was a percipient observer of the great urban and industrial changes which were taking place, and the disruption they caused to the old social and economic order:

> Bristol has, doubtless, been injured by the rapid Prosperity of Liverpool and its superior spirit of Enterprise; and the vast machines of Lancashire have overwhelmed and rendered hopeless the domestic Industry of the Females in the Cottages and small Farm-houses of Westmorland and Cumberland.[57]

Coleridge was convinced, however, that these developments also brought great long-term benefits. The new expansion in trade and industry would, in time, act as a beneficial stimulant to all sections of the community. He was certain it would,

> act as a stimulus on the producing Classes, and this in the most useful manner, and on the most important branches of production, on the Tiller, on the Grazier, the Clothier, and the maker of Arms.[58]

Short-term dislocation and unemployment would soon be transformed into positive growth. Coleridge, therefore, praised the construction of new roads, canals and docks, the expansion of villages into towns, and the increasing constellation of satellite cities around London. These developments, along with the rise in population, were all welcome signs of Britain's social and economic health and vigour. Coleridge believed that these would soon contribute to the increased prosperity of all.[59]

Since Coleridge was such a stout advocate of these new economic developments, it might be expected that he would also embrace the spirit of enterprise capitalism which had partly inspired them. To an extent this was true, for Coleridge had great regard for the enterprising and commercial spirit of British entrepreneurs. He saw the expansion in trade, particularly, as a civilising influence in the world.[60] Nevertheless, Coleridge could not accept the extremes to which this new economic system was taken in the pursuit, and worship, of Profit. He believed

that industrialisation had to serve the interests of all the people, not just the employers. As the war drew to a close, Coleridge began to notice how manufacturers, buoyed up by their recent war-time profits, were now becoming obsessed with the pursuit of gain as an end in itself. It was this self-interested abuse of a system, which had the potential to help all, that most troubled Coleridge. Like Wordsworth, he characterised the new acquisitive spirit as the worship of a false god. Indeed, Coleridge believed this worship of materialist fetishes to be one of the predominant characteristics of the new age. He argued that now people tended,

> to break and scatter the one divine and invisible life of nature into countless idols of the sense; and falling prostrate before lifeless images, the creatures of his own abstraction, is himself sensualized, and becomes a slave to the things of which he was formed to be the conquerer and sovereign. From the fetisch of the imbruted Africa to the soul-debasing errors of the proud fact-hunting materialist we may trace the various ceremonials of the same idolatory, and shall find selfishness, hate and servitude as the results.[61]

Thus, shallow, materialist values of the present were supplanting the profound Christian values on which society had always been founded. Man was becoming a slave to Mammon.

Coleridge blamed the provenance of this new idolatory on the works of Adam Smith and his disciples. His theory of political economy had encouraged people to disregard national welfare in a headlong pursuit of personal wealth. Personal and public morality were neglected and workers were reduced to mere beasts of burden:

> I dare affirm, that few superstitions in Religion have been so extensively pernicious to the intellectual and moral sanity of this Country and France, as those of (so called) Political Economy ... [it] implies the utter contempt of all that distinguishes or rather that forms the chasm, the <u>diversity</u> in <u>kind</u>, between man and beast.[62]

Adam Smith's system was supposedly based on 'free' principles : free trade, free competition and free labour. Coleridge argued that Smith's definition of freedom echoed that of the radicals: it was an abstract, unlimited concept which resulted in licence. Just as he believed radical principles led to despotism, so did Smith's laissez-faire system, for it merely accorded employers the licence to deal with

their workers in whatever way they felt it, in order to increase profits. These new economic despots reduced all the natural variety of human life to 'abstractions' and 'technical calculation'.[63] People were treated 'as parts of a mighty system of machinery.'[64] But Coleridge argued that people were not things, and could not be treated in this despotic fashion without their soul being imperilled and the whole moral fabric of the nation disintegrating.

Thus, Coleridge regarded this new, inhumane, commercial spirit as another species of radicalism. It was based on the same type of abstract principles, and had resulted in the same type of despotism. Coleridge also argued that this new spirit was a genuine revolution since he believed that all revolutions were necessarily followed by a decline in national morality.[65] Just as the French had been an external threat to the British constitution, so this laissez-faire system was a similar domestic threat to it, which had to be countered in the same vigorous way. Coleridge was concerned that people should be treated and cared for as human beings, not things. While discussing the way in which Highland Landlords cleared tenants from their estates, destroying time-honoured communities, to make way for more profitable sheep farming, Coleridge remarked: 'Man, I still think, ought to be weighted not counted. Their worth ought to be the final estimate of their value.'[66] Coleridge was in favour of a system of moral economy, rather than political economy.

In his Lay Sermon (1817), Coleridge investigated why this commercial spirit had become as pervasive and excessive. His conclusions are important because they predicate the type of solutions he was to recommend. He argued that the commercial spirit, so worthy in itself, had become excessive because the counterweights which should have held it in check had proved weak. Coleridge blamed the current distress on:

> the OVERBALANCE OF THE COMMERCIAL SPIRIT IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE ABSENCE OR WEAKNESS OF THE COUNTER-WEIGHTS; this over-balance considered as displaying itself, 1. In the COMMERCIAL WORLD itself; 2. In the Agricultural: 3. In the Government: and, 4. In the combined Influence of all three on the more numerous and labouring Classes.[67]

Although the materialist spirit had originated in the commercial world, Coleridge argued that it soon affected all classes, because it had gone unchecked. Whereas Wordsworth was much more concerned by the

the effects Smith's theories would have on the morals of the common people, Coleridge saw evidence of the new spirit in every class, including the once dependable landowners. By the term 'government', Coleridge also included the entire ruling class, temporal and spiritual, both inside and outside Parliament.[68] They had neglected the positive ends of the constitution which ensured the people's welfare. Lastly, the ordinary people themselves were affected by the system, not because they too had sold their souls to the god of Profit, but because their moral values and spirit had been crushed. Thus, Coleridge believed the commercial spirit had poisoned every level of society.

Coleridge identified a number of factors which had been weak in restricting this new spirit and which now needed to be strengthened. The first was 'the ancient feeling of rank and ancestry'.[69] The old reverence for heredity and tradition, that would normally have countered the current pursuit of gain, had become infected by the commercial system itself. Coleridge saw signs that personal wealth was becoming more estimable than ancestral status. Even amongst the titled themselves, there was evidence that they were abandoning 'the maxims of ancient prudence',[70] in favour of the more vulgar values of money. This was an idea which was probably derived, in part, from Coleridge's reading of Harrington's Oceana (1656), in which a similar fear is expressed.[71]

The second weak counterweight to the commercial spirit was the lack of philosophical and moral education not only among the public in general but also the ruling classes.[72] This meant that the nation became easily attracted by the superficial charms of materialism, and more serious, profound values were neglected. The third factor, closely related to this, was the decline in religion in Britain during the 1810s. Coleridge believed that the practice of religion was vital for detaching people from worldy things and guiding them to a more spiritual understanding. He argued, however, that Christian teaching had become too simplified and had neglected the profound truths which had to be considered more deeply.[73] Thus, religion had also become infected with the superficiality which was a hallmark of the commercial spirit. This religiousand moral decline will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

Coleridge was, therefore, more interested in strengthening these

elements and counterbalancing the commercial spirit, rather than trying to restrict its growth or making it serve traditional rural society as Wordsworth desired. Wordsworth saw the new economic developments as a rival form of society set to destroy the 'natural' state of the nation. Coleridge accepted the growth and development of the new economy as a complement to traditional society, but one which needed to be balanced with a similar strong regard for older principles.[74] These time-honoured Christian values would serve to humanise and moralise the developments taking place. Whereas Wordsworth wished to retain the structure, as well as the principles, of traditional society, and only tolerated industry if it served this purpose; Coleridge was more interested in retaining traditional principles and then investing them into the new structure of industrial life. In this way, he believed that, not only would the economy be run more humanely, but it would also prosper even more in material terms and the whole nation would benefit in the success. Both visions of the future are more liberally inclined than most contemporary conservatives would contemplate, but Coleridge's concept is the more dynamic and progressive; it accepts the need for an organically growing structure.

Coleridge feared that if the state did not intervene to secure the social welfare of the people and the moral education of the nation, the country would soon be run on strictly utilitarian, materialist lines.[75] As employers subordinated people to things, so the common people would also be encouraged to substitute rights for duties. In this way, the whole traditional fabric of the nation and the constitution would be rent asunder by the commercial spirit, rather than be benefited by it. Years later, at the height of the Reform Bill agitation in 1832, this was a fear that Coleridge found borne out by events. The revolutionary implication of capitalism, which neglected moral responsibility, was now fully realised as the common people demanded political rights with no mention of duties.[76] In the 1810s, however, Coleridge still believed there was a possibility of countering this hard, materialist spirit which threatened constitution and state. He argued that it was now the function of the government to intervene and fulfil its constitutional duty of providing for the social welfare of the nation.

State intervention on social issues was not much favoured by radicals or conservatives. The reform movement, which had revived in the 1810s, was more moderate than that of the 1790s, and was more interested in limited political reforms, and in issues which had been common in the eighteenth century: high taxation, monopolies and corruption. Only a few of the more independent radical writers, such as Cobbett, discussed the plight of the distressed in any detail. Tory writers were even less concerned with changes. Burke's interest in haumanitarian reform had waned in the 1790s and latterly he had favoured a mostly non-interventionist theory of government.[77] For Burke and most conservatives, government was constituted mainly for security from foreign enemies, to preserve law and order, and to prevent evil, rather than attempt to intervene in order to help certain sections of the community in a positive way. Indeed, some followers of Malthus believed that too much was already being done to help the poor, with the consequence that the population continued to grow.

Wordsworth and Coleridge do not fit into either of these groups. They were more socially concerned than most Tories and more interested in evolutionary reforms than the radicals. By the end of the war, however, both had become convinced that the state needed to intervene on matters of social welfare and they believed that this had to be a vital and growing feature of the constitutional system. Nevertheless, they advocated social reform for very different reasons to Cobbett's. They believed that if the constitution served the people well, they would hold its traditional principles in greater affection and respect, as well as have their hardships ameliorated. Thus, social reforms could help the constitution live and retain its meaning for all the citizens; whereas Cobbett recommended reform in order to change the constitutional system, as well as help its citizens. Wordsworth and Coleridge hoped that social conditions could be improved so that the people would once again become receptive to those old moral values which were in danger of being lost or overbalanced. Nevertheless, it will be argued that although both writers were concerned to retain these traditional values, Coleridge was less concerned, than Wordsworth, to retain or regain the old pre-industrial structure of society. Wordsworth emerges as a humanitarian Tory; Coleridge is perhaps the first true liberal-conservative.

Wordsworth believed that, just as ordinary people were naturally

interested in helping each other, so should governments adopt a humane interest in the welfare of society. He praised 'those benign elementary feelings of society, for the preservation and cherishing of which, among other important objects, government was from the beginning ordained.'[78] Since all persons in society were tied together by bonds of love and responsibility, the government had to act on these principles and ensure that the people were cared for. This was Wordsworth's ideal of true government: 'These are the sympathies which prove that a government is paternal, - that it makes one family with the people.'[79] It was this type of humane paternalism which was lacking in the 1810s; this positive function of government had been neg lected. Wordsworth presented the Lowther family as an ideal example of this paternalism in action at both a local and national level. They were caring, responsible landlords, who, when elected to Parliament, similarly ensured that the welfare of their constituency was attended to by government. Wordsworth described Lord Lowther as a man,

> who, by his influence with Government, may facilitate the execution of any plan tending, with due concern for general welfare, to the especial benefit of Westmorland.[80]

The Lowthers were a glowing example of state paternalism in action; working for the welfare of the nation at large, as well as for the people of their own constituency.

Wordsworth believed that if the existing constitution and social structure were to remain intact, these positive, humanitarian ends of government had to be followed. It was the duty of the state to deal justly with all its citizens and ensure that none was oppressed by his condition. In the inter-linked society of the past, it was natural for the people to be cared for responsibly, but until these old bonds were renewed, the state had to take a more active role and continue to be vigilant. Moreover, if the constitutional system ensured that the people's welfare was promoted the people would be less likely to question its worth and relevance, and their affection for the system would increase. Wordsworth, therefore, recommended that government should ensure that the people received an adequate reward for their labour and were able to secure a comfortable standard of living.[81] This was not to raise the ordinary people above their current social status, but rather make them more content and easy within their existing class.

The structure of society would thus be confirmed and strengthened, rather than challenged.

Although Wordsworth clearly favoured fair and adequate wages, he was not very specific in outlining other reforms which might be necessary. In general he favoured returning, as far as possible, to a more paternalistic, even feudal, world, where master and worker were bound by ties of duty and responsibility, and where the disruptive effects of the new industrialism had hardly impinged. Wordsworth still had hopes that this traditional state of society with all its attendant moral principles could thrive again, despite the damage that the new changes had done to its fabric:

> sufficient vitality is left in the Stock of ancient
> virtue to furnish hope that, by careful manuring,
> and skilful application of the knife to the withered
> branches, fresh shoots might thrive in their place.[82]

One of the chief aims of state intervention therefore was to restore society to its previous traditional, mainly rural state. This required re-establishing the old social bonds by curtailing the new developments in industry, which fractured the nation, socially and morally, as well as fulfilling the constitutional duty of caring for the poor and distressed, just as they had once been looked after naturally in the more responsible society of the past.

Wordsworth's aim was not so much to make the new industrial society more humane and acceptable, but to attempt to retard its growth altogether and return to the rural lifestyle of the past. He did not understand, as Coleridge did, that the economic and industrial developments comprised a new and permanent force within society that could not be stopped: they were part of the natural society of the future. Wordsworth, instead, lamented the passing of a time when machines were unknown and all work was carried out in natural surroundings.[83] In the character of the Wanderer, Wordsworth sympathises with the wish to banish forever the 'wisdom' which brought about the new industrial age and which caused so much misery:

> Oh, banish far such wisdom as condemns
> A native Briton to these inward chains,
> Fixed in his soul, so eagerly and so deep;
> Without his own consent, or knowledge, fixed!
> He is a slave to whom release comes not,
> And cannot come.[84]

Nevertheless, Wordsworth did realise that once factories had been introduced, there was little chance of removing them completely, even though this would have been preferable to him. In 1843 Wordsworth reviewed the preceding thirty years since he had written against machines in The Excursion.[85] He was pleased that factories had not invaded the Lake District, but had flourished only in lowland areas, where coal was to be found. Thus, his home area still retained something of the rural arcadia which he regretted the rest of the country had lost. His ideal remained a rural society. Nevertheless, he praised the state legislation which had attempted to ameliorate the worst conditions of the new industrial system, although he lamented that so little had been accomplished. Clearly, having accepted the reality of factories, he welcomed state intervention to improve them. Wordsworth could see that a few machines might help man and relieve him of some of the toil which had habitually sapped his energy and spirit, but he believed their growth had not been sufficiently checked or regulated, and all their potential for good had been crushed by their excessive and amoral use in industrial development.[86] Machines could only be tolerated if they served the traditional, essentially rural, life and values of the nation, and were used in a moral fashion.[87] Thus, although Wordsworth welcomed the way in which Parliament had tried to reform the factory system, he still desired the growth of industry to be restricted altogether, not just humanised. Even in 1843, he concluded that it was still not too late to stunt the growth of this new industrial society. This is what state intervention should really have aimed to do, rather than making factories more bearable and so encouraging further growth.

Wordsworth concluded his survey by delivering a warning to legislators that their efforts regarding industry had been misplaced and that unless, even as late as 1843, they restricted the new developments, all the Wanderer's fears of a totally immoral, divided society and a broken constitution, would soon be realised:

> I cannot forbear noticing the strenuous efforts made at this time in Parliament, by so many persons, to extend manufacturing and commercial industry at the expense of agricultural, though we have recently had abundant proofs that the apprehensions expressed by the Wanderer were not groundless.[88]

Wordsworth also believed that government needed to reform the administration of the Poor Law. He argued that the Poor Law did little to

alleviate the real causes of poverty, but merely deprived people of self-respect and independence. Wordsworth was convinced that only government intervention could help:

> May they exhibit, in treating this momentous subject, a tenderness of undeceived humanity on the one side, and a sternness of enlightened state-policy on the other! Thus, and thus only, can be checked immediately, and, in due course of time, perhaps removed, an evil by which one claim and title is set in array against another, in a manner, and to an extent, that threatens utter subversion to the ancient frame of society! This is the heaviest burden that now lies upon England! Here is a necessity for reform which, as it cannot prosper unless it begin from a Government and the upper ranks in society, has no attraction for demagogues and mob-exciting patriots.[89]

The Poor Law was evil because it set the claims of the poor to a decent wage and standard of living against those of the rate-payer who objected to subsidising labourers' wages when farmers should have paid them adequately in the first place. In this way the old dependencies and reciprocal duties, on which society depended, were gradually being pulled apart and class was being set against class. Poor Law reform did not interest radical demagogues, Wordsworth claimed, because they rejoiced in this fragmentation of the old society which would lead to a break-down of the constitution. Wordsworth, however, saw reform as vital, and advocated that government should ensure that only those who were totally dependent were given help through the Poor Law. Secondly, he proposed that those people, who were in employment, should be paid adequately, thus relieving the burden on the rates, restoring their self-esteem, and repairing the old moral fabric of society. But they were still not to be raised outwith their class.

In these different ways, Wordsworth hoped that the state would begin to intervene to secure the social welfare of the people. This was a traditional, paternal duty prescribed by the constitution, which had been neglected in recent years. As distress and discontent rose in the 1810s, and a new, evil type of industrial society began to emerge, Wordsworth argued that this governmental duty must assume an enhanced place in the constitutional system. Governments, now, had to become more socially concerned not merely to help the people but in order to protect the existing constitution, and its principles, as well as maintain the structure of society in its traditional form. The final area, in which the

government had to intervene in order to counteract the new industrial society and restore the nation to its previous state, was in the field of moral education. This will be investigated in the final chapter.

Coleridge had always been interested in social welfare and educational provision for the ordinary people. In the 1790s these had been proposed as a necessary prelude to awarding the people equal political rights. The aim then had been to effect an evolutionary change in the constitution. By the 1810s, Coleridge still believed these reforms were necessary to improve the lives of the people, but they were now seen more as an end in themselves, a fulfilment of the existing constitution's duty. Nevertheless, Coleridge's interest in these positive ends of government was more extensive than Wordsworth's. Although he argued that social and moral reforms were vital for maintaining the traditional principles of the constitution, he did not view them as a means for preserving the structure of the state unchanged. Social and moral reforms would enable the national organism to grow and change, without losing touch with the time-honoured principles which underpinned its life. Social reforms would not curtail the new industrial society, but make its conditions more comfortable so that people would be capable of acting upon the traditional moral values of the nation.

Coleridge always had great faith in the ability of individuals to transform society. Most of these figures were political leaders such as Washington, but Coleridge also revered the work of social reformers who had done much to improve conditions, even when the people themselves had little understood their work:

> What have not Clarkson, Granville Sharp, Wilberforce, and the Society of Friends, effected for the English Nation, imperfectly as the intellectual and moral faculties of the People at large are developed at present.[90]

As the industrial and material conditions of the people improved, so would the beneficial effects of social reforms, such as these, accumulate and spread more quickly. Coleridge believed that every individual could play his own part in this process; each small contribution, adding to the success of the whole. If man became actively involved in the welfare of his neighbour, there was no limit to the good which could be done.

The government, however, had the biggest role to play because it could intervene at national level. Coleridge deplored the Malthusian disregard for the sufferings of the poor. He characterised the typical

Malthusian as someone who believed that 'he who would prevent the Poor from rotting away in disease, misery, and wickedness, is an Enemy to his Country!'[91] For Coleridge, an increase in population demanded an increase, not a decrease, in the need for the state to help. In contrast to Malthusian doctrine, he praised the 'parental character'[92] of the town governments in Germany. Coleridge believed that the government was constitutionally bound to ensure that all citizens were adequately equipped and rewarded for their work, had the means to a comfortable subsistence, and had the hope of improving their own condition.[93] Coleridge was to argue that this entailed continual state interest, and intervention, in social concerns. This function was increasingly necessary as society itself was experiencing so many different changes and it could no longer be assumed that the people's welfare was being attended to in the natural way of the old interlinked society. The state now had to fill the gap left by irresponsible employers.

Coleridge wished to recover the cause of social reform as an issue which conservatives could wholeheartedly pursue. He believed it had become too identified with radical politics and was now tainted with their violent, extremist methods.[94] Coleridge contended that conservative writers were wrong to believe that a few necessary social reforms would lead to demands for more change, and then result in public disruption. Their policy of repression was short-sighted because it assumed that the only way to deal with social discontent, and the rise of radical agitation, was by its suppression. Instead, there had to be more attention paid to the very real grievances of the people. Coleridge attacked those conservatives who believed,

> that as the Peace of Nations had been disturbed by the diffusion of a false light, it may be re-established by excluding the people from all knowledge and all prospect of amelioration. O! never, never![95]

Gradual, evolutionary reforms to improve the education and material condition of the people would not challenge the traditional constitution, but help to bind a happier people to it, so that it could grow and flourish as society did. To repress the people was only to invite the very same disruptive response which the conservatives feared.

Coleridge regarded state intervention as the moral antithesis of the selfish, materialistic spirit of the new political economy, for it recognised a duty to other people, and it was concerned with welfare rather

than wealth. It was thus a moral antidote to capitalism. He addressed the ruling classes in these terms:

> If you possess more than is necessary for your own wants, more than your own wants ought to be felt by you as your own interests. You are pacing on a smooth terrace, which you owe to the happy institutions of your country, - a terrace on the mountain's breast. To what purpose, by what moral right, if you continue to gaze only on the sod beneath your feet?[96]

The people were thus entitled, as a moral and constitutional right, to the care and concern of the ruling classes. They were also entitled to a fair share in the profits which accrued from their employment. Workers were not merely things, used as the means to an end, but were involved in a process which entitled them to a share in that end.[97] For employers to think only of themselves and their profits was unChristian.

Coleridge argued that government intervention would not only bring benefits to the economy, but also to the state itself:

> I feel assured that the Spirit of Commerce is itself capable of being at once counteracted and enlightened by the Spirit of the State, to the advantage of both.[98]

The new economy would be moralised and made to serve the interests and welfare of all the nation. In the process, the state would acquire a greater spirit of enterprise and become more involved in the social organism. The state would be more dynamic and progressive. Thus, Coleridge did not want to use the state to curtail the new industrial developments, as Wordsworth did, but he wished the government to humanise them, and enlighten the population so that industry could grow with a sense of moral purpose. This was the state's Christian, as well as constitutional duty and it was a constant requirement.

Coleridge was also much more specific than Wordsworth in the reforms he favoured. To counteract poverty, he recommended the abolition of lotteries which encouraged impecunious behaviour[99]; he believed that men should hold off marrying until they were thirty years of age, when they could better afford it[100]; he advocated investment in the most active areas of the economy and he encouraged people to turn to new trades such as canal-building[101]; and, finally, he favoured reform of the Poor Law which he regarded in a similar way to Wordsworth.[102] He was also interested in other social issues, such as the harsh punishment given to criminals

and the continuance of slavery. Nevertheless, there was one social issue which attracted Coleridge's concern more than any other: the conditions inside the new factories. His extensive writings on this issue provide ample proof that Coleridge was a firm advocate of state intervention, but also that he accepted Britain's social and economic changes as organically linked to the natural life of the nation. These changes merely required to be more harmoniously attuned to the traditional moral values of the country. State intervention had to become an important and growing element in the constitutional system. These ideas reveal Coleridge, in his own age, to be a uniquely liberal conservative theorist.

Coleridge had first mentioned factories in his Lectures on Revealed Religion in 1795, when he recognised their economic value, but also regretted their evil effects on the workers and on the dirty, pestilential towns which they spawned.[103] Coleridge was convinced that factories were not inevitably evil, but, by improvement, they could become a boon, not merely to the national economy, but also to the workers. Coleridge became actively involved in the cause of factory reform in 1818, at exactly the time when Wordsworth was actively campaigning for the Tories in Westmorland. Sir Robert Peel's Bill, introduced in February of that year, was designed to restrict the working laws of children to eleven per day, excluding meals. Coleridge read about the Bill in The Courier, but he feared that the public had not been adequately prepared to accept the measure - nor had proper parliamentary arrangements been made for its passage.[104] Coleridge wrote a long article for the newspaper supporting the measure and then, at Peel's request, he produced at least two pamphlets on the issue. Factory reform was to preoccupy Coleridge over the next year and this reveals his positive commitment to state intervention. It is also an interesting episode in Coleridge's career for Peel's request shows the influence and status Coleridge now enjoyed as a political theorist and journalist.

In his Courier article, Coleridge used his considerable literary talents to construct a heavily ironic, sardonically humourous piece, supposedly opposing the bill on the grounds that there was,

> the necessary comfort, health and happiness, inherent in the present system of management in the many factories, which, like oaks, have attained their perfection by slow advances.[105]

The bizarre analogy between factories and oaks served to highlight what Coleridge believed to be the main deficiency in the factory system. Factories had not grown gradually as part of the organism of the state. Thus, the system lacked the moral spirit which would naturally have grown with this process. It was, therefore, the government's task to invest these traditional values into the system through liberal reforms. The moral struggle waged against Napoleon now had to be extended to the domestic front.

In his pamphlets, Coleridge attacked those who argued that there was no need for government action because it would interfere with the right of free labour. As we have seen Coleridge believed this to be a meaningless, abstract right, which involved no reciprocal duties and which merely allowed employers the licence to treat their workers as tools.[106] The state had to curtail this 'freedom' and impel employers to take account of their moral duties. Coleridge also attacked those who claimed that there was no precedence for state intervention and that it was dangerous to initiate one. He argued that state intervention was not against 'the principles and spirit of the British Constitution'.[107] The constitution made allowance for the need to intervene to ensure that the claims of the individual were compatible with those of the commonwealth, and thus the legislature could limit activities which were only benefiting a few, while proving injurious to many.[108] Although such instances were rare, Coleridge was able to cite the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 as an example of state intervention.[109] Nor did Coleridge believe that Peel's Factory Bill would necessarily lead to a clamour for further reforms; although he believed many were justified. Coleridge sensed that if Peel's modest measure was not granted, the demand for much greater radical reforms would become overwhelming.[110]

Thus, Coleridge defended intervention on the grounds of experience, pragmatism, and morality, and he argued that it was sanctioned by the constitution. He then claimed that the state was the only body capable of intervening effectively and nationally on such social issues. He doubted whether the masters themselves could be left to administer reforms when most of them were only motivated by 'the keen stimulants of immediate profit'.[111] They were uninterested in humanitarian reforms which might undermine this end, and even if they could be persuaded to shorten hours, would probably compensate by reducing wages. Since the employers had

abrogated their sense of moral responsibility, the government was seen as the sole agent capable of action: 'such evils cannot be removed without the aid of legislative authority.'[112] This Christian and constitutional duty was not just confined to the issue of factory reform, but applied to all measures which were as well justified, morally and pragmatically:

> If they [i.e. other reforms] are equally just, if the grievances that justify them are as heavy, and if the proposed remedy be attended with no great inconvenience, in God's name let them be conceded![113]

Although Coleridge only advocated gradual social reform, it is clear that he did see state intervention as a permanent duty of government, especially in the new post-war industrial world. To those radicals who argued that such gradual reforms were too limited to be of any use, Coleridge answered that, although the present reform was indeed modest, it was a solid start, which would have a greater chance of being accepted than the wholesale reform some of them desired. He attacked the idea 'that we are to do nothing of what we can, because we cannot do all that we would wish.'[114] Coleridge believed that there was a middle course between Owenite utopian schemes, and the conservative view that nothing should be done.[115] He argued that Owen's views were too extreme. They would have little chance of being implemented at national level, and, even if they were, they would be too innovatory and would therefore disrupt society. Small, gradual reforms would be more acceptable to both employers and workers.[116] They would preserve social continuity and prove more permanent; they could then be enlarged upon, later, as circumstance demanded. This was Coleridge's ideal for prudent, practical, effective state intervention. It marked him off from both the conservatives and the radicals, but it prefigures the type of social reform which was to become common later in the century.

After finishing his pamphlets, Coleridge continued to follow the debate in Parliament and may even have produced further pamphlets which have not come to light. Certainly, his correspondence shows his continuing interest as well as his increasing despair. When the Bill was halted in the Lords by the Scottish Earl of Lauderdale, Coleridge bitterly attacked him, not only for his action, but also for being Scottish and, therefore, linked, in Coleridge's mind, with the hated Adam Smith and his system of political economy.[117] Coleridge believed that the Bill had been killed

by a group of capitalists in the Lords, who were intent on extorting all the profits they could and exploiting the people in the process. Coleridge increasingly saw the new breed of capitalists as the evil foe of society, of the constitution and of all moral values:

> Whether some half score of rich Capitalists are to be prevented from suborning Suicide and perpetrating Infanticide and Soul-murder is, forsooth, 'the most perplexing Question ....'[118]

The only force which could arrest this small, but growing power of evil, was the state. It should, however, be noted that Coleridge was not a kind of early Socialist thinker: he viewed the emerging economic divisions in society in moral terms, rather than in a class context.

By 1819 Coleridge had worn himself out campaigning for the Factory Bill. He now believed that Britain was inexorably producing its own type of slave - the factory workers. This was a blot which made even Coleridge doubt his old faith in Britain's superiority as a free nation and as an upholder of moral values. In this Notebook entry, his depression and doubts are palpable:

> Feby. 25, 1819. Highgate: after reperusal of my inefficient yet not feeble Efforts in behalf of the poor little white slaves in the Cotton Factories. - But[still] are we not better than the other Nations of Christendom? Yes - perhaps - I don't know - I dare not affirm it. Better than the French, certainly! Mammon versus Moloch and Belial. But Sweden, Norway, German, the Tyrol. - No.[119]

The confident assertion of Britain's superiority, found in his national tables in The Friend only a year before, had now evaporated. It was not just the materialistic, exploitative nature of capitalism which filled him with dread, but also the fear that there was not even the moral will to effect the remedy of state intervention. The efforts of 1818 had failed and, when the Cotton Factories Regulation Act was finally passed in 1819, it was an even feebler piece of legislation; only limiting children's hours of work to twelve a day.[120] The reason for Coleridge's obvious depression lies in the fact that the battle for factory reform symbolised, in his mind, a larger moral fight for the traditional values of Britain. It was the reluctance of the rulers of society to intervene legislatively and ensure that these values continued to live in the new industrial world which so depressed Coleridge. The failure of such a modest, worthy, reform measure signified a larger failure in the national

political system to change organically with society, and ensure the continuance of time-honoured moral principles. The need for state intervention seemed evident to him, but the moral will of the governing classes was weak and afraid of change. Coleridge, therefore, advocated the need for a system of moral education to instruct and enlighten, not merely the people, but also their rulers, in what were their duties and responsibilities. For social reform to take place, this primary need had to be addressed.

Although it is clear that Wordsworth and Coleridge agreed that the constitutional system had to provide for a greater degree of state intervention in social welfare issues, it is also obvious that Coleridge regarded this enlarged and growing function of the state in a more progressive way. Wordsworth supported paternal reforms which would help the people, by restricting and cutting back industrial growth and by attempting, as far as was possible, to preserve the traditional society of rural England. Coleridge, however, did not advocate reforms which would preserve the nation's traditional lifestyle, but rather its time-honoured values and moral principles. Reforms would ensure that these old values and duties would continue to live and grow in the new sociey of the industrial towns. This positive end of the constitution was not to preserve the nation from social and economic change, but to promote these by ensuring that they were realised in accordance with the nation's traditional principles and Christian values. In this way the national organism would be able to grow and change, while retaining moral permanency.

CHAPTER VIII

MORAL EDUCATION

> direct palliatives indeed may, and have been, applied; but as remedies, even the wisest legislative measures can only have an indirect operation, and are themselves but a more august species of moral influence.[1]

At the deepest level Wordsworth and Coleridge believed that the problems of post-war Britain could only be dispelled by the moral education of the people. Social reforms would alleviate their physical hardships and better enable the people to act in a responsible manner, but only a process of moral enlightenment could teach them where their duties lay. The provision of a national system of education which did not just teach academic skills, but also moral values, was the final, but most important, end of government. The new individual society and its commercial spirit presented the nation with a challenge which was not just social or economic, but was, at heart, moral. Economic change had brutalised the people and encouraged the ruling class to think in terms of material gain, rather than moral responsibility. An extensive programme of national education was required therefore to right this imbalance and to restore the traditional, reciprocal bonds of moral duty that had always served to bind the nation together. Wordsworth and Coleridge no longer believed that it was the function of education to prepare the ordinary prople for an assumption of power, as they had advocated in the 1790s; now education was seen as a bulwark of the state and as the source of the moral principles which underpinned its constitution. Once again, however, it will be argued that Coleridge was more concerned that education should maintain the organic, growing nature of the state than it should preserve its exact, unchanging shape.

The state's failure to institute a national system of education was, therefore, the final and most important respect in which the constitution was deficient. Wordsworth and Coleridge now regarded educational provision as the most vital function of any government and, to a degree, their own political philosophy resolves itself, finally, into a programme of moral enlightenment. Coleridge was convinced that, of all the ends of government,

> The defects of our Constitution (in which word I include the Laws and Customs of the Land as well as

> it's scheme of Legislative and Executive power) must exist, therefore, in the fourth, namely the production of the highest average of general information, of general moral and religious principles, and the excitements and opportunities which it affords, to paramount Genius and heroic power, in a sufficient number of its' Citizens. These are points in which it would be immorality to rest content with the presumption, however well founded, that we are better than others, if we are not what we ought to be ourselves, and not using the means of improvement.[2]

Wordsworth and Coleridge had both believed the Napoleonic War to be a moral crusade and the battle of Waterloo in 1815 should, therefore, have been a definitive moral triumph and not just a military victory. As we have seen, however, the morally unified, responsible society, which they had expected to emerge, failed in fact to materialise. Instead, the nation seemed more divided and morally debased than ever before. It was the perception of this failure that impelled both writers to advocate their educational schemes with a greater sense of urgency than ever before.

At first, the discontent and unrest of the 1810s did not crush Wordsworth's hopes that the various classes of society were drawing nearer each other in a spirit of mutual responsibility.[3] But, as the disturbances continued, Wordsworth realised how easily the people were incited into riotous behaviour because of their lack of education and the brutalisation of their moral feelings caused by the factory system. The true, long-term solution, he argued, was not to repress the people further, but to begin to educate them so that they would become more virtuous and responsible:

> - The discipline of slavery is unknown
> Among us, - hence the more do we require
> The discipline of virtue; order else
> Cannot subsist, nor confidence, nor peace.
> Thus duties rising out of good possest
> And prudent caution needful to avert
> Impending evil, equally require
> That the whole people should be taught and trained.
> So shall licentiousness and black resolve
> Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take
> their place; and genuine piety descent,
> Like an inheritance, from age to age.[4]

Now that the unifying and moralising effect of the war was waning, Wordsworth recommended that its beneficial influence had to be continued in peace by more permanent, formal means. A state scheme of education would maintain the ever-needful struggle against ignorance and immorality. In 'these troubled times'[5] of unrest, Wordsworth believed that education was vital for restoring order by dispelling ignorance and by teaching the traditional moral values which humanised, and linked one age to another in a single continuum. Wordsworth urged that this educational role should be one of the chief aims of all peace-time governments:

> Now, when destruction is a prime pursuit,
> Show to the wretched nations for what end
> the powers of civil polity were given.[6]

Thus, the turbulent decade of the 1810s convinced Wordsworth of the primary need for a system of education, not only for the knowledge and values it could impart, but also as a means of social control.

Coleridge had similarly expected that the war would prove to be a permanent lesson in moral education; this was to have been the war's 'golden side'.[7] Nevertheless, as the war ended, divisions in society reappeared and he noticed how the people, in their ignorance, were easily swayed by the propaganda of the radicals and the Whigs. The new industrial system had demoralised the workers and their masters were made selfish. The end of the war witnessed a general release from moral restraint and a loosening of the national consensus, rather than the expected inauguration of a golden age of morality. Perhaps the external Evil had been vanquished in 1815, but the domestic evil was growing more virulently than ever before. For Britain to attain true moral salvation, the battle for virtue still had to be waged; this time within the nation itself:

> Peace has come without the advantages expected from Peace, and on the contrary, with many of the severest inconveniencies usually attributable to War. 'We looked for peace, but no good came: for a time of health and behold trouble. The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.[8]

In this mood of disillusionment, Coleridge began to review the course of the war and he concluded, regretfully, that the nation had not been so thoroughly moralised by the conflict as he had once believed.

There had not been a true, spiritual change in the hearts of the people or in the rulers of society. He believed that even the government was implicated in this moral failure, although the ministers were less culpable than other sections of the community. Although the government had led the country into a just war, it had been more concerned with the expedience of defeating an evil foe, than following the light of moral truth that was to be discovered in the bible:

> What however is achievable by the human understanding without this light, may be comprised in the epithet, K E V Ó Ó ¶ O V Ó O i [a vain industry]: and a melancholy comment on that phrase would the history of human cabinets and Legislatures for the last thirty years furnish![9]

Although Coleridge still supported the Tory Ministry as the most reliable upholder of Britain's political values, he did now recognise that its motives for conducting the war had not been so purely Christian, as he had once believed.

When even the superficial moral influence of the war had ended, Britain again lapsed into more selfish ways. In the notes for a projected article in 1823, Coleridge contrasted 'the paradisical Morality of the English People' until 1815, with 'their only not universal Devilry from 1817 to 1823.'[10] Coleridge found this lack of principle evident at every level of British society. Unlike Wordsworth, who was mostly concerned with the ignorant behaviour of the common people, Coleridge believed that the brutal and materialistic spirit of the new industrial age had infected every section of the nation. Even though he believed that the more Godless, radical doctrines of the 1790s had been disposed of, he still found no 'real diffusion of sound thinking in the nation at large.'[11] Coleridge argued that even many of the ruling classes, who defended the constitution, based their case on the fallible grounds of reason and common sense, rather than on immutable moral principles. Until they began to understand its moral premiss, the constitution would not be safe:

> The articles of our Church, and the true principles of government and social order, will never be effectually and consistently maintained against their antagonists till the champions have themselves ceased to worship the same Baal with their enemies, till they have cast out the common Idol [i.e. common sense] from the recesses of their own convictions, and with it the whole service and ceremonial of IDOLISM.[12]

For Coleridge, this moral failure of the ruling classes was much more important than the ignorance of the people because, ultimately, the people could only be instructed by the higher classes. Thus, Coleridge recommended that the upper classes had to be re-educated in their moral duties and the people had to be educated in academic skills as well as moral principles. Only then would social order be maintained, the moral unity of the nation be preserved, and the constitution would be free to live and grow. At present, however, Coleridge believed that 'a vicious and ignorant population was a magazine of combustibles left roofless.'[13] Coleridge thus recommended a state scheme of national education, not just as a constitutional duty, but also as a matter of expedience in the troubled post-war era.

Before examining their specific educational schemes, it is necessary to explore how Wordsworth and Coleridge defined the nature and function of 'education' within the context of current ideas. Most political thinkers, at this time, were interested in education because, implicit in every theory of education, there is a political vision of how the world should ideally be constituted. Even in the 1790s few radical reformers in Britain had advocated constitutional change without some eductional provision for the lower classes in order to prepare them for an enlarged political role. In that decade, Wordsworth and Coleridge had argued that the republican experiment in France had been undermined by the fact that the people had not been properly educated to assume power.[14] Radicals, however, wished to use education to teach people their rights and to prepare them for government; insofar as conservatives were interested in education, they believed its function was to teach the people their duties and to fit them for their existing role in the constitution. Although Wordsworth and Coleridge had initially favoured education in the radical sense, after 1802 they increasingly gravitated towards a more conservative definition. They do not fit in easily here either, however, because both writers believed that education had to impart academic knowledge as well as moral principles. Moreover, in the 1810s, most conservatives were fearful of most schemes of popular education because they were convinced that a more educated public would demand an increased social and political

status and would become unfit for their time-honoured role. In pressing for a national educational scheme, Wordsworth and Coleridge were, again, extending the limits of conservative thinking into more liberal spheres.

Wordsworth was influenced by a number of educational schemes in the 1790s, each of which he was ultimately to reject. Godwin's concept of national education seemed too abstract in it formulations. Wordsworth came to reject the idea of human perfectibility and, with it, Godwin's idea that education would lead to a perfect world through the triumph of reason over error. For a time, Wordsworth was also impressed by his friend, Thomas Wedg wood's scheme for 'necessitarian' education. Wedg wood argued that if a child was carefully instructed, he would, necessarily become exactly what his teachers wished. Wordsworth, however, soon found this to be a rather mechanistic ideal: 'instruction', rather than true 'education'. Wordsworth's own mature ideas, on the definition of 'education', began to develop as he wrote The Prelude, between 1799 and 1805. This great work was, itself, an account of the poet's own education through Nature, and James Chandler has recently argued, in convincing manner, that, in its early five-book form, The Prelude was probably concerned solely with Wordsworth's ideas on education and it was then naturally expanded to deal with his subsequent political development.[15]

Wordsworth attacked the rational, educational schemes of the French 'philosophes', such as Lakanal. He found their ideas abstract, arid and too intellectualised. Wordsworth had always regarded pure book learning as 'a dull and endless strife',[16] which taught one little of real life or nature. Seeing some tourists pass through the Lake District, reading about the area, but not actually looking at their surroundings, Wordsworth exclaimed,

> There are twenty-four letters, and these ye can read;
> But Nature's ten thousand are Blanks in your sight.
> Then throw by your Books, and the study begin.[17]

In The Prelude an extensive part of Book V is devoted to attacking this rational system of education, based on book-learning rather than on Nature.[18] This type of instruction produced a child who was well-read, knowledgeable about worldly things, and skilled in analysis and the scientific arts:

> The inside of the earth, and spell the stars. he can read [19]

The result was not a child, but a 'dwarf man'[20]: a creature who had none of the natural innocence of a child, but, instead, could 'read lectures upon innocence'.[21] This creature could reason and dissect life, but he had no true feeling for his fellow man, nor any creative imagination. He had no sense of the oneness of the world of man and nature; no moral sensibility. This type of superficial instruction was fundamentally self-centred.[22]

Posited against this morally-bankrupt type of education, Wordsworth advocated a schooling in Nature. The rest of Book V is dedicated to this form of education:

> This verse is dedicate to Nature's self
> And things that teach as Nature teaches.[23]

This might seem to indicate that Wordsworth subscribed to the educational theory propounded by Rousseau in Emile, published in 1762, but in fact, it is this type of natural education which Wordsworth attacks in The Prelude. It has been argued already that Wordsworth, by 1800, regarded 'nature' in the Burkean sense, referring to man's natural social state. Thus, when Wordsworth recommended a schooling in Nature, he did not mean Rousseau's original state of nature, but rather the current state of traditional, rural society. Whereas Rousseau believed that exposure to social life, with its institutions and prejudices, was not part of nature, but stifled the natural development in a child, Wordsworth saw the traditions and customs of rural life as a natural part of social life. These, therefore, had to form a vital element in the educational process of any child who was to live in that society.

Wordsworth's definition of the educational process was one which comprised a love of nature, a schooling in social customs and moral values, and, finally, a degree of intellectual instruction. Communion with nature lifted the soul and a boy reared in the midst of the country would develop a much fuller emotional and spiritual life. A feeling for natural forms helped one appreciate the unity and harmony of existence, and helped one understand the greater, universal truths.[24] Nevertheless, this was not a sufficient education for it would produce only an unrestrained, passionate child, unable to be at home in the world of other people. Thus, Wordsworth also praised the customs taught

to him by his mother:

> she who was the heart
> And hinge of all our learnings and our loves
> ... she, not falsely taught,
> Fetching her goodness rather from times past
> Than shaping novelties from those to come.[25]

Although his mother died young, it was from her that Wordsworth first learned of the past and the traditional benevolences to be discovered there. It was from her, too, that he imbibed domestic, moral values; a schooling in moral principles which he later depicts the village church as continuing.[26] A natural schooling had to include an education in the values and customs of the community.

Lastly, Wordsworth did not omit book-learning. Although he was opposed to a purely intellectual type of education, centred on books alone, Wordsworth recognised the importance of knowledge which could only be gained from reading. Book V of The Prelude was entitled 'Books' and, in it, Wordsworth showed how books had enlivened his own imagination and feelings, so that he could consider things beyond the everyday world. He did not mean to praise arid text books, but rather those books which lifted the spirit and quickened the creative faculties; works, such as The Arabian Nights, or great poetry which had the power to move and instruct as nature itself did. These were the types of books Wordsworth had discovered, and learned from, in his father's house at Cockermouth.[27] As the child grew older, there would be more formal tutoring, using less fabulous books, and, involving more study of the world as it actually was. This completed Wordsworth's ideal of the natural education of social man:

> - I mean to speak
> Of that delightful time of growing youth
> When cravings of the marvellous relent,
> And we begin to love what we have seen;
> And sober truth, experience, sympathy,
> Take stronger hold of us; and words themselves
> Move us with conscious pleasure.[28]

Thus, the concept of education, which Wordsworth evolved in writing The Prelude, was a schooling in the traditional rural society of the time; in its knowledge, experiences, traditions, moral values, as well as its feeling for nature itself. In this way, each person would become better fitted for the world and be able to assume his role in society, responsibly and knowledgeably. The ultimate function of

education was, therefore, to enable man to fulfil his position in the existing social and constitutional system. This was even more necessary in the restless 1810s, than ever before. Wordsworth advocated,

> imparting knowledge, civil, moral, and religious, in such measure that the mind, among all classes of the community, may love, admire, and be prepared and accomplished to defend, that country under whose protection its faculties have been unfolded, and its rules acquired.[29]

In answer to conservatives who feared popular education would lead to social and political change, Wordsworth supported it as a bulwark of the existing constitution and the moral values and traditions on which it was based.

In Conciones ad Populum (1795), Coleridge had argued that the people's unrest was caused by their ignorance and their material hardships, neither of which had been attended to by government.[30] Until this was done, the granting of equal political rights would be meaningless and ineffective. The people's political judgement would be worthless until they had been given more knowledge.[31] Thus, like Wordsworth, Coleridge had originally supported the idea of popular education as a necessary preliminary to political reform. Nevertheless, by the 1800s, Coleridge had also rejected the radical concepts of Rousseau and Godwin, and he now defined the nature of education in more conservative terms. He believed that education would enable people to fulfil their role in the social and political system more knowledgeably and responsibly; but that role was necessarily growing and changing within an organic constitution.

Coleridge advocated a system of education that was 'natural' in the Burkean sense; one that prepared man for living in the existing social state. But, since Coleridge regarded both country and urban life as natural, he was not so much concerned with Wordsworth's need for a schooling in natural surroundings. Education had to be based on the social experience and traditions of the nation as a whole. He believed that education could serve to remind people of their local attachments and help bind the nation together rather than leave it divided by ignorance and false prejudices.[32] Coleridge did not see the teaching of reading and writing to be the end of popular education, but rather

its means.[33] Education was fundamentally a process of social and moral learning, and these faculties of reading and writing were merely the means of producing citizens who could think and act responsibly, and with knowledge. The teaching of basic literacy was mere 'instruction', not 'education'. Coleridge, therefore, conceived education to be a process whereby man's faculies, and his morality and reason, were developed, but then fashioned towards the specific social role that the individual was likely to assume in later life. Following the ideas of Dr. Bell, which will be investigated later, Coleridge argued that education:

> consists in educing, or to adopt Dr. Bell's own expression, eliciting the faculties of the Human Mind, and at the same time subordinating them to the Reason and Conscience; varying the means of this common end according to the sphere and particular mode, in which the Individual is likely to act and bcome useful.[34]

In this way an education system would ensure that each person was more capable of performing his full social role. Moreover, Coleridge was to recommend this type of education, not only for every class, but for all females, as well as males.[35] He believed that education could improve the moral and intellectual condition of all people within their particular rank in society, but only in a very few instances did he ever envisage education raising individuals out of their class altogether. A system of education was to be implemented so that the social and constitutional state could function more effectively as one harmonious, interdependent organism. This entailed each class being trained to fulfil its duties to capacity. Coleridge argued that the function of eduction was,

> To preserve, and not to disturb or destroy, the gradations of society; to catch the falling, not to lift up the standing, from their natural and native rank.[36]

This passage, however, was written about the specific function of Coleridge's old school, Christ's Hospital, which educated the children and orphans of poor middle-class parents, who would otherwise have sunk below their allotted station in life. Although it basically expresses Coleridge's views on the function of education, it should not be taken as his final statement on this issue. He did recognise that, in an organic society, the education of all classes would not merely preserve

the existing structure, as Wordsworth contended, but also cause it to grow and change. Coleridge attacked conservative writers who argued that the anarchy in France in the 1790s had been caused by giving the people too much knowledge. Coleridge argued that the problems had been created by not giving them enough. Coleridge believed that ordinary people in the 1810s were now thirsting for knowledge and that this legitimate desire had to be fulfilled by the government. If the ordinary people were given knowledge, and were not just instructed in their moral duties, then there would not only be less discontent, but the people would be able to undertake an enhanced, more responsible role in the community. Thus, education would not just enable people to fulfil the role of their particular rank in society, but that role itself would become more important to the state:

> shall I address myself to those, who think that as the Peace of Nations has been disturbed by the diffusion of Knowledge, falsely so called, and the excitement of Hopes that could not be gratified; that this Peace may be re-established by excluding the People from all Knowledge, all Thought, and all prospect of Amelioration? O never, never! Reflection, and stirrings of Mind, with all their Restlessness and all their Imperfections and Errors, are come into the world. The powers that awaken and foster the Spirit of Curiosity and Investigation, are to be found in every Village; Books are in every Cottage. The Infant's cries are hushed with picture-books; and the Child sheds his first bitter Tears over the Pages which will render it impossible for him, when a Man, to be treated or governed as a Child. The cause of our disquietude must be the means of our Tranquillity: only by the fire, which has burnt us, can we be enlightened to avoid a repetition of the Calamity.[37]

Coleridge still believed education to be a preparation for fulfilling the role of one's rank in society, but that society was an organism and one's role in it was a living element. In this passage he shows how education was part of that dynamic organic process, which would necessarily change society. The growing thirst for knowledge would ensure that the next generation would no longer be treated or governed as children. The implication is that, through education, the people would gradually attain an enhanced, more responsible role within the nation. They would still be a distinct class, or element, within the organic constitution, but, through their schooling, they would have grown in importance. Thus, Coleridge's definition of education's function was not to preserve the existing social and constitutional system as it stood, but to be a living organism, in which each class would learn

a distinct role and one which could also grow and change over time. It is a much more liberal, and progressive, concept than that of Wordsworth's or Burke's.

Between 1814 and 1818 Wordsworth and Coleridge devised programmes for these types of educational provision, that would be implemented by the state as one of the most vital of all its constitutional duties. There are a number of distinct features which are common to both schemes. Firstly, Wordsworth and Coleridge were interested in enacting clearly-defined plans which would be applicable to the whole nation. Their more informal ideas of the past were now superceded by precise programmes because the urgency of the post-war situation demanded an immediate, engineered assault on the growing ignorance and moral debasement of the people. The Church of England was to play an important role because it seemed to them, the practical embodiment of the religious principles which were so lacking in the country at large. Since it was also one of the pillars of the constitution, its involvement in education would serve to bind the people more closely to the institutions of the state. Thus, the two writers were to favour the 'Madras' system of education propounded by Dr. Andrew Bell,[38] which was based on Anglican doctrine, rather than the rival non-denominational system, set up by Joseph Lancaster.

It also becomes clear, in the post-war years, that Wordsworth and Coleridge were increasingly addressing a middle and upper class readership, who were to institute the educational reforms. The old ideal of self-discovery and individual learning, while still important, was insubstantial as a basis for a national educational plan, especially when the people's spirit had been so lowered by the new economic system. Thus, the two writers urged the higher ranks to take the initiative in educational planning. Coleridge differed from Wordsworth, however, in believing that the upper classes had to be re-educated first in moral principles. Their burgeoning materialist spirit had to be countered by reminding them of their old moral responsibilities to the rest of society. Only when this process had begun, Coleridge argued, would the upper classes be capable of educating the rest of the population. Through their two schemes of education, Wordsworth and Coleridge hoped

that the nation would become morally enlightened, that ignorance would be gradually diminished, and that everyone would be re-dedicated to the moral values and principles underlying the social and political state.

After the Lyrical Ballads' experiment of writing in the language of ordinary men, Wordsworth's work, in the 1810s, was increasingly written for an upper class readership, in a style which could only be fully appreciated by them. The Excursion (1814), which contained his mature reflections on education, was written in a highly philosophical style and his Westmorland Address (1818) was composed for 'the consideration of the upper ranks of Society'.[39] Although he also planned to write other 'brief Essays, in plain and popular language ... for the understanding of the lower orders'[40], these were never written. In a similar way, Coleridge failed to compose the third Lay Sermon , in 1817, which was to have been aimed at a similar readership.[41] Both instances reveal how central the upper classes had become to Wordsworth's and Coleridge's own educational purpose. The two writers realised that their schemes only had a chance of being implemented if they were initiated with the willing cooperation of the governing classes.

Wordsworth wished the ruling classes to establish, immediately, a national educational scheme. His previous reliance on the forces of nature, combined with the traditonal schooling from parents and parish was insufficient, of itself, to combat the new industrial society and its values. In the final book of The Excursion (1814), written in the wake of the Luddite riots, Wordsworth proclaims the need for state intervention:

> O for the coming of that glorious time
> When prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
> And best protection, this imperial Realm,
> While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
> An obligation, on her part, to teach
> Them who are born to serve her and obey;
> Binding herself by statute to secure
> For all the children whom her soil maintains
> The rudiments of letters, and inform
> The mind with moral and religious truth,
> Both understood and practised, - so that none,
> However destitute, be left to droop
> By timely culture unsustained; or run
> Into a wild disorder; or be forced
> To drudge through a weary life without the help
> Of intellectual implements and tools;

A savage horde among the civilised,
A servile band among the lordly free!
This sacred right, the lisping babe proclaims
To be inherent in him, by Heaven's will,
For the protection of his innocence.[42]

This important passage reveals Wordsworth's belief that education was the God-given right of every citizen. It was also a constitutional duty incumbent on all governments; just as the state could expect the obedience of the people, so the people could expect a system of education provided by the state. By such means the essential equation between duties and rights could be maintained. All children, of whatever status, were to be taught basic literacy, as well as religious principles and moral values. The result would be a more self-disciplined, responsible people, less likely to cause social disorder. Their everyday existence would be heartened, eased and civilised. This system would thus achieve a basic minimum moral and intellectual standard across the nation and would enable each citizen to undertake his social role to the best of his abilities. Wordsworth believed that the state had to act as the parent of the nation and had to provide for its education as though the people were its own children. Wordsworth referred to the 'State's parental ear',[43] which listened to the people's need for education, and the 'mother's heart'[44] which he hoped would respond to the plea.

This education system, instituted by the state, was to teach the doctrine of the Church of England. Wordsworth argued that this would not only ensure a sound moral instruction of the people, but would strengthen their regard for the state, of which the Established Church was an important bulwark. In a note referring to the need for a statutory educational policy, Wordsworth proposed his ideal scheme:

> The discovery of Dr. Bell affords marvellous facilities for carrying this into effect; and it is impossible to overrate the benefit which might accrue to humanity from the universal application of this simple engine under an enlightened and conscientious governement.[45]

Bell's system, initiated in Kendal in 1797, made use of pupil monitors and mutual instruction, and was based on Church of England teaching. Wordsworth was attracted by the monitorial methods because they inculcated a regard for interdependence and reciprocal duties. Wordsworth believed that schools organised on these simple, innately

moral lines, could have a disproportionately good effect. They would not be pretentious, over-intellectualised places of study, but would teach the people moral values and enlighten the entire nation.[46]

Wordsworth also argued that if this system was instituted all over the country, it would create a happier, more unified nation. Just as the national struggle against Napoleon had united the land in a spirit of moral purpose, so now in peacetime, a system of national education could achieve the same on a more permanent and profound basis. As each citizen was educated in his moral responsibilities, so the traditional, interdependent structure of the nation would be repaired and its constitution strengthened. If similar schemes for moral education were adopted by the other countries in Europe, Wordsworth envisaged how every nation in the continent would become internally unified, happier and more contented. If this was accomplished then there would be the real prospect of a more harmonious, less war-like, Europe:

> if that ignorance were removed, which breeds
> Within the compass of their several shores
> Dark discontent, or loud commotion, each
> Might still preserve the beautiful repose
> Of heavenly bodies shining in their spheres.[47]

If Britain implemented the national scheme of education, which Wordsworth recommended, then this would serve as an example to all, and it would be the first step towards a more united, peaceful Europe.[48]

Wordsworth believed that there was an urgent need for the government to act quickly and set up Bell's system of moral education. This was an action which could not be delayed for, in the 1810s, Wordsworth was convinced that the constitution, and its principles, was under heavy attack from radicals, Whigs and capitalist employers, and was being undermined by a general weakening in the moral spirit of the people. Thus, a national educational programme needed to be implemented immediately to repair the traditional bonds of state and constitution. This scheme could not be introduced in a piecemeal fashion, but had to be conducted at national level by the government itself so that the whole country could then unite around its old ideals and political system. Only then would the constitution live for all the people again and the nation be moralised. Addressing the government with this sense of urgency, Wordsworth pleaded:

- Vast the circumference of hope - and ye
Are at its centre, British Lawgivers;
Ah! sleep not there in shame! Shall Wisdom's voice
From out the bosom of these troubled times
Repeat the dictates of her calmer mind,
And shall the venerable halls ye fill
Refuse to echo the sublime decree?
Trust not to partial care a general good;
Transfer not to futurity a work
Of urgent need. - Your Country must complete
Her glorious destiny.[49]

Wordsworth did realise, however, that the state's task would not be easy and that it would take a long time before the people were morally instructed. This passage from The Excursion, expressing the ideas of the Wanderer, evokes a response from a gentle Lady, who doubts the feasibility of such an idealistic vision of a moralised nation:

When he is speaking, I have power to see
Even as he sees; but when his voice hath ceased
Then, with a sigh, sometimes I feel, as now,
That combinations so serene and bright
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours.[50]

Here, perhaps is an acknowledgement by Wordsworth himself that, although his vision of a morally educated Britain was a beguiling prospect, it would not be easy to realise it in the practical world. It is significant, however, that the Lady's more cynical strictures are, themselves, cut short, by shouts of joy from two boys, tripping down the field towards the little group.[51] It is an image which suggests that the world can be happy and virtuous, and that the Wanderer's plans for educating such children as these could create a more harmonious society; at least, the attempt had to be made. The reversal of the country's moral decline would, however, be slow and gradual. In an essay, a year later, Wordsworth conceded, 'Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt all at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment.'[52] Nevertheless, for the state to survive, moral education was vital.

Wordsworth ended The Excursion with an invocation from the Priest to God, calling on Him to ensure that the Word of God would be spread throughout the world.[53] Wordsworth believed the Bible to be the greatest educator of all and, in these final passages, he reveals how his educational scheme, and indeed his whole system of politics, was merely a part of one great crusade of moral enlightenment. Education ensured a moral basis for the constitutional system, and the constitution

was yet a further means for realising God's laws in a pragmatic form suited to each distinct nation. Moral truth was the greatest knowledge of all; the whole purpose of human life. Moral truths were understandable to all, no matter what one's station in life, or what one's intellectual capacities. Wordsworth praised God,

> Whose love, whose counsel, whose commands, have made
> Your very poorest rich in peace of thought
> And in good works; and him, who is endowed
> With scantiest knowledge, master of all truth
> Which the salvation of his soul requires.[54]

The access to moral truth, which was available to all, remains the last vestige of Wordsworth's egalitarian ideals; a consolation to the poor, or dispossessed, who may be unequal in every other aspect of their lives. In social and political terms, Wordsworth's educational scheme was designed to alter very little: a civilising agent in the lives of the common people, but more importantly, a confirmation of the existing British state and constitution which he believed to rest on Christian principles. Morally, however, the people would be enlightened and be given access to those God-given truths, whose knowledge was the right of all. Despite the fact that Wordsworth, ultimately, sought only moral change - and even then it was as a reversion to that of a previous age, the seventeenth century - he was still ahead of most current Tory thinking. He believed that a basic level of moral and intellectual education was the right of all; that the state was constitutionally-bound to provide this in a national system; that such a programme of instruction was a more effective way, than repression, of controlling the people and binding them to the state. If one considers these ideas in relation to his thoughts on social welfare, and also against his conservative defence of the constitution in the Westmorland Address (1818), then Wordsworth still emerges as a Tory, but one of a distinctly paternalistic and humanitarian kind.

In the 1810s Coleridge also developed a distinct plan of education, similar in many ways to Wordsworth's, but involving the moral instruction of the entire community; the ruling classes as well as the lower orders. In the 1790s he had praised individual efforts to teach religious principles,[55] but, while not belittling personal responsibilities, he came to realise that a national system of education would be more effective in combatting the rampant commercial spirit of the post-war era.

This state scheme would be based on the religious principles of the Church of England. Religion, for Coleridge, was not merely to be the most important subject taught, but was itself a method of teaching: it could not be divorced from life, but was part of the living process, Coleridge believed that the Established Church provided the best, practical embodiment of religious thought. It was the custodian of the nation's religion and a bulwark of the constitution and state. Thus, education based on Anglican teaching would not only provide the most meaningful form of moral instruction, but would also bind the people to the state and its organic constitution. Coleridge, therefore, regarded free-thinking not so much as a mark of liberty and tolerance, but as an escape from any real religious commitment. He attacked all systems of education which were free-thinking and not based on adherence to fixed religious beliefs:

> In every other thing that is taught fixed principles are inculcated, but in religion, which more than any other thing, requires the inculcation of principles, children are to be left to judge for themselves![56]

This was Coleridge's principal objection to the non-denominational system of education set up by Joseph Lancaster. His scheme was based on abstract religious ideas which, Coleridge argued, were incapable of being grasped until embodied in a specific form, like that of the Established Church.[57] Education grounded on these abstract principles would create a generation unversed in meaningful moral values, and this would soon undermine both the constitution and the Church which upheld and depended upon these values. Thus, Coleridge argued that the Lancastrian scheme was merely a species of Jacobinism which similarly endorsed abstract rights with no concern for attendant duties. Coleridge claimed that, in Lancastrian schools, prejudice against the rich was encouraged by always characterising them as an oppressive class.[58] This educational system also used harsh methods of discipline which, far from being effective, tended to harden the hearts of the children and to brutalise them.[59] Coleridge argued, in his notes for an education lecture, in 1808:

> No boy who has been subject to punishments like these will stand in fear of Newgate, or feel any horror at the thought of a slave ship![60]

Thus, in all respects, the Lancastrian system of education was radical and

subversive in intent. It disregarded national traditions and duties in favour of free, unrestrained rights and in this way created a potentially vicious and socially disruptive generation. It seemed a danger to constitution and state.

Coleridge clearly viewed the educational systems on offer in a highly political, as well as moral and religious, context. He believed that it was vital for the constitutional health of the nation that the government intervene to stop the spread of Lancaster's plans, and promote those of Dr. Bell. The latter's programme was grounded in Church of England principles and it endorsed the traditional values of the nation. Bell's use of older pupils to instruct younger ones also meant that moral responsibilities were not merely learned but also lived, in the educational process. This appealed to Coleridge's sense of human experience existing as an organic whole, in which every individual lived interdependently. On the purely pragmatic level, Coleridge supported Bell's scheme because it would dispel people's ignorance and prove to them that their current grievances were unconnected with government policies. It would show that they had been deceived by the radicals and the Opposition. Thus, future discontent and unrest would be avoided:

> What then is wanting? Not the repeal of Taxes; but the encreased activity both of the Gentry and Clergy of the Land, in securing the Instruction of the lower Classes. A System of Education is wanting, such a system as that discovered, and to the blessings of thousands realized, by Dr. Bell, whom I never am or can be weary of praising, while my Heart retains any spark of regard for human nature or of reverence for human virtue! A system, by which in the very act of receiving knowledge, the best virtues and most useful qualities of the moral Character are awakened, developed, and formed into habits.[61]

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge was aware that such a system would take some time to implement and so, in the interim, he praised the work of Bible Societies which distributed books amongst the poor and ignorant. Although he did fear that these societies were not sufficiently grounded in Anglican doctrine, he still believed that they filled a gap in knowledge, until a more truly national system could be instituted. They also prepared the ground for such a scheme to take root and flourish. The moral education, which they provided through their Christian texts, was a necessary corollary to social reform, for while it did not actually diminish material hardships, it gave the poor a consolation which

ameliorated the worst effects of their condition. Coleridge praised Bible societies,

> who exert their attentive powers in dispersing the best of books, the comfort of the comfortless, and the poor man's infallible receipt to make poverty itself a mine of imperishable wealth.[62]

As Wordsworth had also argued that the knowledge of moral truth was the right of all, no matter how lowly. The spread of these truths through the Societies, and ultimately through Bell's scheme, combined with the effect of social reforms, would create an interdependent programme of action to raise the spiritual and material condition of the distressed.

Coleridge was extravagant in his praise of Bell's scheme. He described it as 'an especial gift of Providence to the human race' and as 'this vast moral steam-engine'.[63] Coleridge did, however, realise that, in the post-war world, Bell's system was not sufficient to ensure the moral education of the nation. He still envisaged it as a 'necessary part of the great process'[64], but he recognised, as Wordsworth did not, that other measures would have to be taken before it could be effectively implemented. Coleridge argued that the upper classes were also in need of moral education. The new materialist spirit of capitalism had weakened their sense of Christian duty. Unless they were also morally educated, there would either be no will to institute Bell's system or the educators themselves would be lacking in the requisite, sound moral principles:

> But I am greatly deceived, if one preliminary to an efficient education of the labouring classes be not the recurrence to a more manly discipline of the intellect on the part of the learned themselves, in short a thorough recasting of the moulds, in which the minds of our Gentry, the characters of our future Land-owners, Magistrates and Senators, are to receive their shape and fashion.[65]

In this way Coleridge conceived of education in a more liberal way than Wordsworth, embracing all of society in one great process of moral change and enlightenment. This was not an educational scheme to be paternally imposed on the lower orders, but one in which the minds and hearts of the leaders of society also had to be re-educated, in order to effect a change in the spirit of the nation as a whole. The entire national organism had to become involved in the educational process and, in this way, the moral and organic nature of the constitution would be confirmed and would live for the nation.

Coleridge recommended that the re-education of the ruling classes should commence with a return to the fundamental principles of the Bible, which they had been neglecting. The first of his Lay Sermons, dedicated to these classes, was called The Statesman's Manual: The Bible the Best Guide to Political Skill and Foresight (1816). The Bible was the essential grounding for all the moral values which inform political and constitutional practices. Coleridge believed that, since the moral decrepitude of the present age was so great, the ruling classes would have to begin their education with the most basic Christian principles:

> The very terms of ancient wisdom are worn out, or (far worse!) stamped on baser metal: and whoever should have the hardihood to reproclaim its solemn Truths must commence with a Glossary.[66]

The truths contained in the Bible were not abstract, but had a living reality and practical application which could be readily understood and acted upon.[67] Anglican teaching came closest to realising it. Once the upper classes had been taught these truths again and began to live them, then they could begin the instruction of the rest of sociey until the process of enlightenment was complete.

The problem remained of finding a means of initiating the process. Coleridge believed that the re-education of the upper classes could be accomplished by the efforts of a relatively few learned men in society. In The Friend (1809) Coleridge hoped that about a hundred such men could combine together and begin the task of spreading more virtuous and moral habits.[68] Indeed, he was convinced that his own journal would appeal to this learned class, 'a sufficient number of meditative minds',[69] who would provide the nucleus for the re-education of the whole of society. Since The Friend had set out to elucidate true moral and political principles, Coleridge felt sure that his subscribers, taken from the upper and middling classes, and the clergy, would heed his advice and recall others in their ranks to these truths. This concept of a permanent learned class, or 'clerisy', who were the moral educators of the nation and the guardians of its constitutional principles, was an idea which was to be fully explained in Coleridge's last political work, On the Constitution of the Church and State (1830).[70] Although he first described this group as a 'clerisy' in 1821,[71] the concept is already apparent in Coleridge's thinking by the time he wrote the two Lay Sermons (1816-17). The Statesman's Manual (1816) was addressed 'exclusively ad clerum;

i.e., (in the old and wide sense of the word) to men of clerkly acquirements, of whatever profession'.[72] Coleridge defined this clerisy as an elite group within society, composed of the most learned men of every profession, but particularly the theological. In a Burkean sense they were to be responsible for the continuity of civilisation in all its highest forms: in the pursuit of moral, philosophical, artistic, religious and political truth. This small class of people was deemed to be capable of restoring the intellectual and moral health of the nation. Coleridge argued for,

> the importance of a philosophic class, and of evincing that it is of vital utility, and even an essential element in the composition of a civilised community.[73]

The clerisy tried to comprehend the totality and omneity of the world, and were capable of perceiving that the only constant in the social organism was the Word of God. Thus, Coleridge argued that only this group was capable of counteracting the prevailing commercial spirit and reminding the ruling classes of their true moral, political and intellectual role in the community:

> An excess in our attachment to temporal and personal objects can be counteracted only by a pre-occupation of the intellect and the affections with permanent, universal, and eternal truths.[74]

Indeed, Coleridge believed that the clerisy not only had to act as a counterbalance to the materialistic spirit in the upper classes, but also within the Church of England itself. Coleridge argued that the Established Church had weakened, along with the general decline in religious temper. The Church needed to recover the intellectual depth of religious enquiry which it had displayed in the seventeenth century. Only when its vigour and spirit had been revived, could the Church fully enter into a national plan of education. The country would then achieve, by more formal means, the type of national moral education it had naturally received in former days. As Coleridge stated in his Notebooks:

> from the reign of Henry the 8th to James the second's Abdication, no Country had ever received such a national education.[75]

Coleridge's great scheme of education, therefore, began with the duties of the clerisy; and he included himself and Wordsworth in this elite, as theorists and poet-philosophers. Through their literary, linguistic and philosophical interests, these two writers were best able

to comprehend the moral and political truths to be discovered in the words and actions of men. Their published works would then disseminate these ideas to a wider readership and, in this way, Coleridge and Wordsworth would play a major role in beginning the educational process. The clerisy, as a whole, would promote the intellectual and moral enlightenment of the entire nation by first re-educating the higher classes in the Biblical truths which were fundamental to the state and the constitution. As this proceeded, Bell's scheme would then continue the process of education and enlightenment so that all classes would benefit. Although the concept of a clerisy was basically elitist, it was open to all men of great talent, and the final aim was the liberal one, of educating all. Coleridge's plans recognised the moral failings of every class, each dependent on the other, and the consequent educational proposal was one which attempted to create a morally interrelated nation at every level. Coleridge believed that the society which emerged would be a single growing organism. Each class would form a distinct element within this organism, but through moral and intellectual education, each would gain the potential to grow, so that even the role of the lower orders might be enhanced as time progressed. The constitution, which was both a reflection and an instrument of the social organism would, therefore, be maintained and strengthened as a living force. The moral education of society was not just the most important end of government, it lay at the very heart of Coleridge's philosophy for it ensured a growing, changing state and constitution, while maintaining the constancy of traditional principles. The structure of Coleridge's constitution allowed for the continuing process of change, but the principles remained fixed and these were the Word of God. It is a political system of conservative permanency liberated by organic change, all in the service of God.

Coleridge ended A Lay Sermon with an eloquent passage which summed up all these hopes for Britain's future and which underlined his conservative regard for the constitution, but also his liberal belief in organic reform. It is a plea for government to attend to those constitutional duties it had neglected, but which were now so vital: industrial reforms and national education. It is a plea for a more religious, humane and responsible society. Although every act of individual charity was necessary and welcome, the state now had to adopt a more interventionary role in a society increasingly complex, divided

and demoralised. The idea of the constitution which emerges is one derived from time-honoured principles, but employing new means of realising them: a constitution, traditional in essence, but enlivened by a moral, liberal impulse. These are all far-reaching ideas to emerge from the mind of a conservative theorist of this time, and they extend conservatism into new, more liberal areas of thought. They are ideas which distinguish Coleridge from contemporary Tories who urged repressive policies, and from Wordsworth who defended the form of the constitution as it stood, but urged a more paternal eye. Coleridge's constitutional system realised its fixed traditional principles through constant organic change. Twenty years after confronting the dilemma of how society could improve and grow, yet conserve what was best, Coleridge arrived at his mature judgement on how change could be squared with permanence, without one destroying the other: liberal conservatism.

> Our manufacturers must consent to regulations; our gentry must concern themselves in the education as well as the instruction of their natural clients and dependents, must regard their estates as secured indeed from all human interference by every principle of law, and policy, but yet as offices of trust, with duties to be performed, in the sight of God and their Country. Let us become a better people, and the reform of all the public (real or supposed) grievances, which we use as pegs whereon to hang our own errors and defects, will follow of itself. In short, let every man measure his efforts by his power and his sphere of action, and do all he can do! Let him contribute money where he cannot act personally; but let him act personally and in detail wherever it is practicable. Let us palliate where we cannot cure, comfort where we cannot relieve; and for the rest rely upon the promise of the King of Kings by the mouth of his Prophet, 'Blessed Are Ye That Sow Beside All Waters.'[76]

In many respects, Wordsworth's and Coleridge's views on moral education unite all the strands of their political philosophy. The ideas of permanence and change, individual responsibility and state intervention, the ancient constitution and experience, national cohesion and the reciprocal duties of each distinct class, natural society and the organic state, moral values and established religion: they are all present in their plans for this last, but most important, end of government. At the deepest level, their two political philosophies resolve themselves

into systems for the moral enlightenment of the nation, for ultimately both writers believed that true political values were always moral in principle. To provide moral education was to create a more Christian nation from which good government naturally flowed.

In the twenty years since 1797, when they first became firm friends, Wordsworth and Coleridge had travelled far from their original radical principles. Although they still retained something of their old idealism, by 1818, it had assumed a moral, rather than a purely political, form. During that period they had wrestled with, perhaps, the most taxing issue which can ever confront a political theorist: how to fashion a constitutional system suited to a nation experiencing unprecedented change in every facet of its existence? As they scrutinised and re-assessed the temper of that age, Wordsworth's and Coleridge's responses became necessarily complex and changeable. Three distinct, yet deeply inter-related, stages of political development have been discerned, but ultimately, their final stance emerges as a blend of the two earlier phases; a basic conservatism, leavened by some of the liberal impulses which had survived from their more radical period. The difference between the two writers lies in the degree and nature of the change which they were willing to contemplate in this essentially conservative system.

Wordsworth's reaction to the changes all around him was to cling ever more strongly to traditional rural society, the ancient constitution and its principles, while acknowledging that the new economic system had to be cut back and its hardships had to be ameliorated by a more paternalistic, socially-concerned, government. In this way he hoped to preserve the Burkean concept of constitution and state, by implementing the limited type of prudent and pragmatic changes, for which Burke himself had allowed. Coleridge's idea of the constitution was more progressive. Sensing the permanency, and the potential worth, of the new industrial society, he had no wish to stunt its growth. Coleridge accepted change as the essential condition of man and government, and he believed that only the Laws of God were fixed and constant. Whereas Wordsworth was anxious to preserve both the state's structure and principles, Coleridge was more concerned with the latter. These permanent God-given principles had to find a practical form suited to society and, since the social organism was constantly growing and evolving, moral permanence could only be achieved through gradually changing forms. Thus, the new industrial

society had to be accepted, but imbued with time-honoured moral values and, in order to accomplish this, the nature of the political state had to change in sympathy with society; all were part of the same organism of life, past, present and future. In advocating state reforms, Coleridge was not shoring up the old constitutional system against change, but allowing its traditional values to live through change: permanence through progress. If Wordsworth emerges as a paternal, humanitarian Tory, Coleridge invested Burkean conservatism with organic life in an effort to meet the challenges of a new, growing society: he liberalised conservative theory.

By 1818 the political philosophies of Wordsworth and Coleridge had assumed their definitive state. Wordsworth wrote little else on political issues and, in his later years, he became more of an establishment figure. Nevertheless, even in the 1830s, he was still avidly interested in political ideas and in gradual reforms which might preserve the old, more humane society of the pre-industrial era.[77] Coleridge was still to publish one other major political work: On the Constitution of the Church and State (1830). The role of the clerisy was explored there, at much greater length, but the book has little of substance to add to the political theory which Coleridge had already developed by 1818. Through their interest in social reform, both writers were to anticipate the enlarged role of the state during the Victorian period and, in many ways, their combined work foreshadows the future development of the Tory party as it began to adopt more liberal policies. It was, however, Coleridge's more dynamic brand of liberal conservatism which was to have the greatest impact on the long tradition of British conservative thought. J.S. Mill was to nominate him, along with Bentham, as one of the two great seminal minds of their age.[78] Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the interest which both Wordsworth and Coleridge showed in the inter-relationship between politics and morality, permanence and change, lies at the heart of all profound political discourse and theory.

ABBREVIATIONS

(a) Works by William Wordsworth

Cintra	Concerning the Convention of Cintra, (1809).
Excursion	The Excursion, (1814).
L.B.	W. Wordsworth and S.T. Coleridge, Lyrical Ballads, ed. R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones (London, 1965).
Letters	The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt, Vol.I. The Early Years, 1787-1805, revised by C.L. Shaver, (Oxford, 1967); Vol.II. The Middle Years, 1806-11, revised M. Moorman, (Oxford, 1969); Vol.III. The Middle Years, 1812-20, revised M. Moorman and A. Hill, (Oxford, 1970).
Poems	The Poems, 2 Vols., ed. J.O. Hayden, (Harmondsworth, 1977).
Prelude	The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850, ed. J. Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams, S. Gill, (New York and London, 1979).
Prose W.	The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, 3 Vols. ed. W.J.B. Owen and J. Worthington Smyser, (Oxford, 1974).
P.W.	The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, 5 Vols., ed. E. de Selincourt and H. Darbishire, (Oxford, 1940-49).
Westmorland	Two Addresses to the Freeholders of Westmorland, (1818).

(b) Works by S.T. Coleridge

B.Lit.	Biographia Literaria (1817), 2 Vols., ed. J. Engell and W. Jackson Bate, The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge VII., (London and Princeton, N.J., 1983).
E.O.T.	Essays on His Times in 'The Morning Post' and 'The Courier', 3 Vols., ed. D.V. Erdman, The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, III., (London and Princeton, N.J., 1978).
Friend	The Friend, 2 Vols., Vol.1. The Friend (1818); Vol. II. The Friend (1809-10) and other appendices, ed. B.E. Rooke, The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. IV., (London and Princeton, N.J., 1969)
L.S.	A Lay Sermon, (1817).
Lay Sermons	Lay Sermons, ed. R.J. White, The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.VI. (London and Princeton, N.J., 1972).

Letters	Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 6 Vols., ed. E.L. Griggs, (Oxford and New York, 1956-71).
Poems	Complete Poetical Works, 2 Vols., ed. E.H. Coleridge, (Oxford, 1912).
1795 Lects.	Lectures 1795: on Politics and Religion, ed. L. Patton and P. Mann, The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.I., (London and Princeton, N.J., 1971).
S.M.	The Statesman's Manual, (1816).
Watchman	The Watchman, ed. L. Patton, The Collected works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.II., (London and Princeton, N.J., 1970).

(c) Works by Other Authors

Reflections	Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, (1790), ed. C.C. O'Brien, (Harmondsworth, 1968).

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Wordsworth, 'Letter to W. Matthews', 24 Oct. 1795, Letters.I, 153.
2. Coleridge, B.Lit. I, 77.
3. See The Diary of Joseph Farington, ed. Kathryn Cave (New Haven and London 1982) Vol.X p.3628.
   On 7th April 1810 Farington quotes Lady Beaumont: 'She said that the acquaintance of Coleridge with Wordsworth commenced at a Political Debating Society, where on one occasion Wordsworth spoke with so much force and elo q uence that Coleridge was captivated by it and sought to know Him'. Since it was Coleridge who was lecturing in Bristol, in 1795, on political and religious issues, it is probable that Lady Beaumont confused the two writers in her mind. In old age, Wordsworth claimed he had first met Coleridge in the latter's lodgings in Bristol.
4. Dorothy Wordsworth, 'Letter to Mary Hutchinson', 14 Aug. 1797, Letters I, 190.
5. Coleridge, Hexameters (1799), l.1 and ll. 35-36, Poems I, 304 and 305.
6. See Lucy Newlyn, Coleridge, Wordsworth and the Language of Allusion, (Oxford 1986).
7. Revd. Orville Dewey, The Old World and The New (1834), The Works of the Revd. Orville Dewey, (London, 1844), p. 622. Dewey met Wordsworth in 1833 and remarked how the subject of politics was one of the few topics which animated Wordsworth. It occupied his mind more than any other issue, even although he was only known as a poet.
8. Coleridge, Friend II, 11 Jan. 1818, p. 278.
9. These points were developed more fully in the 'Preface' to the 1800 edition of the Lyrical Ballads. Though mostly written by Wordsworth, these particular arguments were also subscribed to by Coleridge. In Chapter VIII on 'Moral Education', this educative role will be discussed at greater length.
10. Some of the more substantial recent publications on the politics of Wordsworth and Coleridge in the 1790s include:
    D. Aers, J. Cook, D. Punter (edd.), Romanticism and Ideology, (London, 1981);
    J.K. Chandler, Wordsworth's Second Nature, (Chicago, 1984);
    Lucy Newlyn, Coleridge, Wordsworth and the Language of Allusion, (Oxford, 1986);
    N.H. Roe, Wordsworth, Coleridge and the French Revolution, 1789-95, (Oxford D.Phil., 1985);
    Olivia Smith, The Politics of Language, 1791-1819, (Oxford, 1984);
    J. Turner, Wordsworth: Play and Politics, (Basingstoke, 1986).
    A further major work on a wider range of Romantic writers, and their association with politics, is Marilyn Butler, Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries, (Oxford, 1981).
11. The extent of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's revolutionary enthusiasm has been discussed in the following pair of articles:
    G. Watson, 'The Revolutionary Youth of Wordsworth and Coleridge', Critical Quarterly Vol. 18, no. 3, Autumn 1976, pp 49-66.
    J. Beer, 'The "Revolutionary Youth" of Wordsworth and Coleridge: another view', Critical Quarterly, Vol. 19, no. 2, Summer 1977, pp 79-87.
12. The outline of the radical thought of Wordsworth and Coleridge, which

follows, will be discussed at greater length in Section I where it will be used as a base line from which to judge their ideological progression and change.

CHAPTER I

1. See Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.258-263, p.372. and Coleridge, France: An Ode (1798), Poems I, ll.22-42, p.245.
2. Wordsworth, 'Letter to the Revd. Francis Wrangham', 20 Nov. 1795, Letters I, 159.
3. Wordsworth, The Female Vagrant (1798), L.B., ll.118-126, pp.48-49.
4. Coleridge, The Destiny of Nations (1796), Poems I, ll.396-409, pp.144-145.
5. Coleridge, Watchman, 272.
6. Coleridge, Religious Musings (1796), Poems I, l.169, p.115.
7. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.791-794 and 799-801, p.400.
8. See Wordsworth, Descriptive Sketches (1793), Poems I, ll.536-545, p.911.
9. See Coleridge, The Old Man of the Alps (1798), Poems I, p.248. This was partly written by Wordsworth. It stresses the personal suffering which the invasion caused. The only peace and consolation which the Swiss girl can find, after the death of her husband in the conflict, lies with her faith in God.
10. Coleridge, France: An Ode (1798): editorial note prefixed to the poem when published in the Morning Post, 16 Apr. 1798, Poems I, 243.
11. Coleridge, France: An Ode (1798), Poems I, ll.80-84, p.246.
12. ibid, ll.89-101, p.247.
13. Wordsworth, Prelude, l.179, p.368.
14. Wordsworth, I grieved for Buonoparte! (1802), Poems I, ll.5-13, p.558.
15. Wrodsworth, Calais, August 15, 1802 (1802), Poems I , ll.12-14, p.578.
16. Wordsworth, England, the time is come ... (1802), Poems I, ll.3-8, p.560.
17. See Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.645-656, p.394. It should be remembered that, in 1797, Wordsworth and Coleridge were spied on, by government agents, while staying at Alfoxden.
18. Wordsworth, England! the time is come ... (1802), Poems I, ll.10-14, p.560.
19. Colridge, Fears in Solitude (1798), Poems I, ll.88-123, pp.259-260.
20. ibid., ll.138-146, pp.260-261.
21. Coleridge, Recantation (1798), Poems I, ll.58-60, p.301.
22. See Coleridge, The Devil's Thoughts (1799), Poems I, pp.319-323.
23. Coleridge, On Peace, IV, 4 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 73.
24. See George Watson, 'The Revolutionary Youth of Wordsworth and Coleridge', Critical Quarterly, Vol.18, no. 3, Autumn, 1976, p.54.
25. Coleridge, On Peace. V, 6 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 76.
26. Coleridge, France II, 13 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 101.
27. Coleridge, Bonaparte I. In His Relations to France, 11 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. I, 208.
28. In 1801, Godwin thought of Napoleon as an auspicious genius. He believed that Napoleon was a true child of the early Revolution and that he would return France to a more popular form of government. See Peter H. Marshall, William Godwin, (New Haven and London, 1984), p.229.

CHAPTER II

1. See Wordsworth, Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793), Prose W I, 33-34; and Wordsworth, Descriptive Sketches (1793), Poems I, ll.780-785, pp.917-918. Wordsworth hoped that virtue would soon spring forth from the violence of the French, and establish itself permanently.
2. Wordsworth, The Borderers (1796-1797), Poems I, ll.1033-1036, p.199.
3. See Coleridge, Ode to the Departing Year (1796), author's footnote, Poems I, 163-164. Coleridge wished to see British radicals become more active and committed to the cause of reform, although he still wished them to work within 'the remnant of the constitution'.
4. Coleridge, Ode to the Departing Year (1796), author's note (1803), Poems I, 162.
5. Wordsworth, 'Letter to Dorothy Wordsworth', 6 Sept. 1790, Letters I, 36.
6. Wordsworth, Composed near Calais ... (1802), Poems I, ll.1-5, p.575.
7. See argument above in Chapter I, pp.17-18.
8. Coleridge, France: An Ode (1798), Poems I, ll.45-48, p.245.
9. Coleridge, Fears in Solitude (1798), Poems I, l.143, p.261.
10. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.805-810, p.402.
11. Wordsworth, A Poet's Epitaph (1798/99), Poems I, ll.27-32, p.396.
12. Godwin's increased recognition of the need for moral duties, and feeling, in his 1795 revisions of Political Justice and Caleb Williams, is discussed in Peter H. Marshall, William Godwin, (New Haven and London, 1984), pp.151-161. In his later novel Fleetwood (1795), Godwin was to see the need for inculcating the same kind of domestic affections which Wordsworth considered so vital - see ibid p.262.
13. See Peter H. Marshall, op. cit., pp.238-240, for a discussion of Coleridge's influence on Godwin after the 1790s.
14. Coleridge dedicated one of his sonnets in the sequence, Sonnets on Eminent Characters (1794) to Dr. Priestley. See Coleridge, Priestley (1794), Poems I, 81-82.
15. Coleridge discussed these points in his letters to Southey throughout 1794. See Coleridge, Letters I, pp.103-4, 112-120, 121-124. See also Coleridge, Poems I, Pantisocracy (1794), 68-69; the conjectural work by Coleridge, On the Prospect of Establishing a Pantisocracy in America (1794), 69; and To a Young Ass (1794), 74-76.
16. Coleridge, Religious Musings (1794-96), Poems I, ll.340-343, p.122.
17. Coleridge, 'Letter to Robert Southey', early Aug. 1795, Letters I, p.158.
18. Coleridge, Lord Moira's Letter, 20 Jan. 1798, E.O.T. I, 16.
19. See earlier comments, above p.19, on the immorality of the Directory which Coleridge believed Napoleon had ended.
20. Wordsworth, The Tables Turned (1798), L.B., l.16 and ll.21-24, pp.105-106
21. James K. Chandler calls this Burkean definition of nature, 'second nature', to distinguish it from Wordsworth's earlier definition which owed more to Rousseau. See Chandler, op. cit. pp.64-74.
22. See John Thelwall, Poems Written in Retirement (1801), and William Hazlitt, On My First Acquaintance with the Poets (1798).
23. Wordsworth, Michael (1800), L.B., ll.451-454, p.233.
24. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.117-120, p.232.
25. ibid., ll.440-444 p.248.
26. ibid., ll.604-607, p.260.
27. ibid., ll.227, p.238

28. ibid., l.443, p.248.
29. ibid., ll.274-284, p.200.
30. ibid., ll.736-741, p.266.
31. See ibid., ll.746-756, p.306. Wordsworth here describes the more positive virtues, and the sense of power, which the ancient capital evokes.
32. Wordsworth addresses Coleridge as a city-bred boy, for the first time in the 1799 two-part Prelude. See Prelude, ll.496-509, pp.26-27. A similar invocation is made in the 1805 version - see ibid., ll.274-284, p.200.
33. Coleridge, Frost at Midnight (1798), Poems I, ll.51-64, p. 242.
34. Coleridge, Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement (1795), Poems I, l.45, p.107.
35. ibid., ll.60-62, p.108.
36. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.496-499 and 505-509, pp.26-27.
37. Wordsworth, Descriptive Sketches (1793), Poems I, ll.520-525, p.911.
38. Wordsworth, Lines Written A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey (1798), L.B., ll.84-94, p.114.
39. See ibid., ll.103-108, p.114.
40. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.288-296, pp.8-9.
41. See 1805 version, ibid., ll.274-284, p.200.
42. ibid., ll.118-123, p.192.
43. Wordsworth, Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey (1798), L.B., ll.108-112, p. 116.
44. Wordsworth, Prelude, l.222, p. 162.
45. Wordsworth, Peter Bell. A Tale (1798), Poems I, ll.1052-1055, pp.348-349.
46. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.404-407, p. 112.
47. Coleridge, The Eolian Harp (1795), Poems I, l.45, p.102.
48. ibid., l.47, p.102.
49. ibid., l.41, p.102.
50. ibid., l.40, p.101.
51. Coleridge, Fears in Solitude (1798), Poems I, ll.186-189, p. 262.
52. ibid., ll.218-220, p.263.
53. Wordsworth's argument on this point is explored in Book VIII of The Prelude (1805), appropriately titled, 'Retrospect: Love of Nature Leading to Love of Mankind'. See Prelude, pp.268-310.
54. Coleridge, Fears in Solitude (1798), Poems I, l.232, p.263.
55. Coleridge, Parliament I, Sheridan and Fox, 24 Dec. 1799, E.O.T. I, 43.
56. Coleridge, General Washington I. Obituary, 27 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 131-132.
57. Coleridge, Fears in Solitude (1798), Poems I, l.24, p.257.
58. Coleridge, Hymn Before Sun-Rise, in the Vale of Chamouni (1802), author's note, Poems I, 377.
59. ibid., ll.18-23, p.378.
60. Coleridge, Recantation (1798) Poems I, l.98, p.303.
61. Coleridge, The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere (1798), L.B., l.63, p.12.
62. See ibid., ll.276-283, p.21, and ll.643-650, p.34.
63. ibid., from 'The Argument', p.9.
64. ibid., ll.630-639, p.34.
65. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.609-612, p.392.
66. Wordsworth, Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793), Prose W. I, 48.
67. Wordsworth, Essay on Morals (1798), Prose W. I, 103.
68. ibid., p.103.
69. Wordsworth, The Old Cumberland Beggar (1798-1800), L.B., ll.81-84, p.208.

70. ibid., ll.96-97, p.208.
71. Wordsworth, Prelude (1799 version), ll.289 and 290, p.8.
72. ibid., ll.387-388, p.11.
73. See Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.222-224, p.76. Wordsworth characterises distinctions and boundaries as man-made contrivances, the product of human weakness, and fundamentally false to the natural course of life which is evolutionary and seamless.
74. See Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.770-786, pp.306 and 308. Wordsworth argues that a place is pleasurable and inspiring, not because of its past history (the record of events associated with it), but because the place evokes an habitual sense of what had been done there through all past ages, by ordinary people who are rarely mentioned in conventional historical narratives.
75. Coleridge, 'letter to John Thelwall', 19 Nov. 1796, Letters I, 260.
76. Coleridge, On Peace. II, 2 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 67.
77. See Coleridge, Diplomacy. I, 12 Feb. 1800, E.O.T. I, 176. Coleridge argues that unless the lessons of experience were heeded in a dispassionate manner, it did not profit the individual at all, but was like a 'torch in the hand of a blind Cupid'.
78. Coleridge, Parliament. III, 1 Feb. 1800, E.O.T. I, 143-144.
79. See Coleridge, General Washington, II. His Will, 25 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. I, 230. He praises Washington's veneration for 'those fixed laws in society, without which that universal liberty must for ever remain impossible.'
80. Coleridge, On Peace. III, 3 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 69.
81. Coleridge, Watchman, author's note, p.122.
82. Wordsworth, Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793), Prose W. I, ll.120-210.
83. Wordsworth, Nuns fret not ... (1802), Poems I, ll.11-14, p.587.
84. Coleridge, Watchman, p.9.
85. ibid., p.13.
86. Coleridge, The Destiny of Nations (1796), Poems I, ll.13-14, p.132.
87. Coleridge, France: An Ode (1798), 'Argument' prefixed to poem in 1802, Poems I, p.244.
88. Coleridge, General Washington II. His Will, 25 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. I, 230.
89 Coleridge, The Plot Discovered, 1795 Lects., pp.285-286.
90. Wordsworth, Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793), Prose W I, 42.
91. ibid., 42.
92. ibid., 43.
93. ibid., 43.
94. Wordsworth, Prelude, l.88, p.420.
95. ibid., ll.216-219, p.448.
96. ibid., l.192, p.100.
97. Wordswroth, The Female Vagrant (1798), L.B. ll.217-221, p.52.
98. Coleridge, To a Young Ass (1794), Poems I, l.26, p.75.
99. See the cartoon 'New Mor a lity' by James Gillray, first published 1 Aug. 1798, in the Anti-jacobin Magazine and Review, in the Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, volume VII, ed. M.D. George (London, 1942). Cartoon 9240.
100. Coleridge, Religious Musings (1794-96), Poems I, ll.339-343, pp.121-122.
101. Coleridge, Lectures on REvealed Religion, 1795 Lects., p.128.
102. See Thomas Spence, The Real Rights of Man (1795), in The Political Works of Thomas Spence, ed. H.T. Dickinson (Newcastle 1982), pp.1-5.
103. Coleridge, Conciones ad Populum, 1795 Lects., p.48.

104. Coleridge, Lectures on Revealed Religion, 1795 Lects., p.165.
105. Coleridge, Fears in Solitude (1798), Poems I, l.113, p.260.
106. Coleridge, On Peace III., 3 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 69.
107. Coleridge, Paper War VII., 28 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 137.
108. Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens by the National Assembly of France (1789) in Thomas Paine, Rights of Man (Harmondsworth, 1791/92), ed. Henry Collins (1969), p.132.
109. Wordsworth, Letter to the Bishop of LLandaff (1793), Prose W I, 42.
110. See, particularly, the following poems by Wordsworth in L.B.: Goody Blake and Harry Gill (1798), p.54; The Last of the Flock (1798), p.78; The Female Vagrant (1798), p.44.
111. See Wordsworth, Goody Blake and Harry Gill (1798), L.B., ll.57-128, pp.56-58.
112. Wordsworth, The Last of the Flock (1798), L.B., ll.83-84, p.81.
113. ibid., ll.71-72, p.81.
114. Wordsworth, 'Letter to C.J. Fox', 14 Jan. 1801, Letters I, p.315.
115. ibid., pp.314-315.
116. Wordsworth, Guilt and Sorrow (1842), Poems I, l.228, p.126. This is the final version of the original poem, The Female Vagrant (1798).
117. See Coleridge, On the French Constitution. II, 26 Dec. 1799, E.O.T. I, 48.
118. Coleridge, On the French Constitution. I, 7 Dec. 1799, E.O.T. I, 31-32.
119. See Coleridge, Parliament III, 1 Feb. 1800, E.O.T. I, 144.
120. Coleridge, Apologia I, 8 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 87.
121. This early debt to Burke in Wordsworth's work, from 1797 onwards, has been recently investigated in James K. Chandler, op. cit. Chandler is particularly concerned with Wordsworth's definition of 'nature' as a social, rather than a pre-social, state.
122. The passage in praise of Burke was included in the 1850 edition ofThe Prelude, published after Wordsworth's death. See Prelude, ll.512-543, p.255. The editors believe that the original date of composition of the passage was c.1832. See ibid., footnote, p.255. In James K. Chandler op. cit., p.26 it is argued that the more likely date of composition was between 1820 and 1828.
123. Coleridge, Sonnets on Eminent Characters (1794-95), Burke (1794), Poems I, ll.5 and 7, p.80.
124. Coleridge, Watchman, author's footnote, p.37.
125. Coleridge, Pitt and Bonaparte. Pitt., 19 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. I, 223.

1. Wordsworth, Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793), Prose W I, 33.
2. ibid., 40-41.
3. ibid., 41.
4. Wordsworth argued that kings like Henry VIII, and James VI and I, were second-rate men compared with their greatest servants - men like Thomas More and Walter Raleigh - who had been executed by them. If all these four men had been voted upon in a general election, the latter two would have won. See Wordsworth, Imitation of Juvenal - Satire VIII (1795-96), Poems I, ll.101-104, p.145.
5. See ibid., ll.117-136, pp.145-146.
6. Wordsworth, Calais, August 15, 1802 (1802), Poems I, ll.12-14, p.578.
7. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.934-935, p.408.
8. Coleridge, Lines (1794), Poems I, ll.1-4, p.57.
9. See Coleridge, On a Late Connubial Rupture in High Life (1796), Poems I, p.152.
10. Coleridge, Religious Musings (1796), Poems I, ll.313-314, p.121.
11. Coleridge, Recantation (1798), Poems I, ll.52-54, p.301.
12. Coleridge, Paper War VII, 28 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 136.
13. Coleridge, Diplomacy IV: The Patriot King of Prussia, 27 Feb. 1800, E.O.T.. I, 205.
14. ibid., pp.206-207.
15. The best source for Wordsworth's early dealing with the Lowther family is still Mary Moorman, William Wordsworth: The Early Years, 1770-1803, (Oxford, 1957).
16. Wordsworth, Imitation of Juvenal - Satire VIII (1795), Poems I, ll.11-14, p.142.
17. ibid., ll.53-56, p.143.
18. Wordsworth's diatribe against aristocracy can be found in his Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793), Prose W I, 44-46.
19. ibid., p.45.
20. ibid., p.46.
21. Coleridge, Honour, (1791), Poems I, ll.11-14, p.24.
22. Coleridge, Sonnets on Eminent Characters (1794-95), To Earl Stanhope (1795), Poems I, l.2, p.89.
23. See Coleridge, A Moral and Political Lecture, 1795 Lects., p.11. Coleridge argues that one's condition was not made worse by one's aristocratic neighbour or his titles, but by all those institutions of society which oppress people physically and mentally.
24. Coleridge, Lines Composed in a Concert-Room (1799), Poems I, ll.55-58, p.325.
25. Coleridge, The Good, Great Man (1802), Poems I, ll.8-16, p.381.
26. Coleridge, On the French Constitution. IV, 31 Dec. 1799, E.O.T. I, 55.
27. ibid., 55.
28. ibid., 55.
29. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.178-182, p.276.
30. ibid., l.465, p.290.
31. ibid., ll.453-458, p.290.
32. Wordsworth describes miners working below the landscape in his Peter Bell (1798), Poems I, ll.834-840, p.342.
33. Wordsworth, Preface (1800), L.B., p.241.
34. ibid., p.245.
35. ibid., p.245.

36. See Wordsworth, Prelude, 11.97-184, pp.442, 444 and 446. Wordsworth here set out to discover how much worth, knowledge and power of mind existed in those who lived by manual labour. He found there, in the ordinary life of the countryside, an ideal existence.
37. ibid., 11.178-184, p.446.
38. The passage concerning the qualities of small, independent proprietors, is to be found in Wordsworth, 'Letter to C.J. Fox', 14 Jan. 1801, Letters I, pp.314-315.
39. ibid., p.314.
40. ibid., p.315.
41. See Coleridge, Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement (1795), Poems I, 11.43-48, p.107.
42. Coleridge, Monopolists and Farmers. Letter V, 14 Oct. 1800, E.O.T. I, 253.
43. Coleridge's discussion of Wordsworth's experiments in language is to be found in B.Lit. II, especially Chapters 17, 18 and 22. Coleridge was, however, an opponent of artificial language which was alien to the author or inappropriate to the theme and ideas being expressed. At the turn of the century, when he was still an opponent of Pitt, he frequently attacked the artificial, superficial style of the Prime Minister. He argued that this masked an absence of moral truth and political depth. A study of language and syntax, thus revealed muchabout a person's moral worth and depth of feeling. This was one of the reasons why Coleridge argued that a writer of literature was often best equipped to divine political truth and falsehood.
A discussion of the relationship between politics and the use of language, in the works of Wordsworth and Coleridge, is to be found in Olivia Smith, The Politics of Language, 1791-1819. (Oxford, 1984). Chapter VI, pp.202-251.
44. Coleridge, B.Lit. II, 58.
45. Coleridge, A Christmas Carol (1799), Poems I, 11.19-20, p.339.
46. Coleridge, General Washington II. His will, 25 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. I, 232.
47. Coleridge, General Washington I. Obituary, 27 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 133.
48. Wordsworth, Letter to the bishop of Llandaff (1793), Prose W I, 36.
49. ibid., 37.
50. ibid., 46.
51. ibid., 37.
52. ibid., 38.
53. ibid., 37-38.
54. ibid., 38.
55. ibid., 38-39.
56. See Wordsworth, Prelude, Book X, pp.358-412. Here Wordsworth charts his early hopes for France and his reluctant relinquishing of these hopes as he realises that the Terror is not a temporary condition.
57. Wordsworth, Prelude, 1.178, p.368.
58. ibid., 11.185-186, p.368.
59. ibid., 1.432, p.382.
60. ibid., 11.182-183, p.368.
61. Coleridge, Watchman, pp.4-5.
62. ibid., p.5.
63. Coleridge, Lord Moira's Letter. Reform and Fox, 20 Jan. 1798, E.O.T. I, 15.

64. Coleridge, On the French Constitution I, 7 Dec. 1799, E.O.T. I, 36.
65. See Coleridge, On the French Constitution II, 26 Dec. 1799, E.O.T. I, 48. Coleridge describes the British constitution as flawed, but embodying, at least, the three important principles of 'the influence of a court, the popular spirit, and the predominance of property.'
66. Coleridge, On the French Constitution I, 7 Dec. 1799, E.O.T. I, 34.
67. Coleridge, Voluntary Subscription, 22 Jan. 1798, E.O.T. I, 19.
68. Coleridge, Paper War VII, 28 Jan. 1800, E.O.T. I, 135-136. Coleridge argued that 'collective Majesty' was the correct phrase to use because 'majesty' originally meant the power and dignity resident in 'the majority of the common weal'.
69. Coleridge, On the French Constitution I, 7 Dec. 1799, E.O.T. I, 36.
70. See Thomas Paine, op. cit., Part II of Rights of Man contained his proposals for social reforms and his attack on expensive government and oppressive taxes.
71. See Dorothy Wordsworth, Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. Mary Moorman, (Oxford, 1971), pp.19, 61-62, 140-142. Dorothy Wordsworth describes the fortunes of the two families and Wordsworth's concern for them.
72. ibid., p.42. Wordsworth here encounters the leech-gatherer; and his dealings with beggars is recounted in ibid., pp.71-73, and 89.
73. Wordsworth, Argument for Suicide (1796), Poems I, ll.1-4, p.161.
74. See Peter H. Marshall, op. cit., p.98.
75. Wordsworth, The Baker's Cart (1796/97), Poems I, ll.5-6, pp.242-243.
76. ibid., ll.18-27, p.243.
77. Wordsworth, 'Letter to C.J. Fox', 14 Jan. 1801, Letters I, 314.
78. ibid., 313.
79. ibid., 314.
80. ibid., 315.
81. Wordsworth, The Old Cumberland Beggar (1797), L.B., ll.140-146, p.209.
82. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.520-526 and 532-534, p.338.
83. See Wordsworth, 'Letter to C.J. Fox', 14 Jan. 1801, Letters I, 314. He now argued that domestic affections were even stronger among that class who had a stake in the nation, by virtue of their small estates and farms.
84. Coleridge, Voluntary Subscriptions, 22 Jan. 1798, E.O.T. I, 18.
85. See Coleridge, Conciones ad Populum, 1795 Lects., 70.
86. Coleridge, Review of a Pamphlet by Arthur Young, Esq., F.R.S., 27 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. I, 236.
87. For a summary of the contemporary debate on the shortages of grain and Coleridge's fluctuating opinion on this, see Coleridge, Monopolists and Farmers I, 3 Oct. 1800, E.O.T. I, n.1. and n.3. by D. Erdman, pp.243-244.
88. See Coleridge, Review of a Pamphlet by Arthur Young, Esq., F.R.S., 27 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. I, 235-236.
89. Coleridge, Monopolists and Farmers I, 3 Oct. 1800, E.O.T. I, 250.
90. Coleridge, A Sermon (1796), 1795 Lects., p.354.
91. Coleridge, A Moral and Political Lecture, 1795 Lects., p.10.
92. Coleridge, Conciones ad Populum, 1795 Lects., p.45.
93. See Coleridge, Watchman, pp.310-311. He argues that a little help given at the right time would have a disproportionately good effect - morally and financially.
94. Coleridge, Conciones ad Populum, 1795 Lects., p.70.
95. Coleridge, Parliament III, 1 Feb. 1800, E.O.T. I, 144.
96. See similar passages in Coleridge, 1795 Lects., p. 318, and Watchman, pp. 224-225.

97. Coleridge, Pitt and Bonaparte. Pitt, 19 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. I, 224.
98. Pitt's Poor Bill of 1797 is discussed in J. Ehrman, The Younger Pitt, (London, 1983) Vol.II, pp.471-476. It was a much criticised measure and Ehrman concedes that it was badly presented. It lacked a coherent, planned approach to poverty. The crisis year of 1797 was, however, an inappropriate time for such a measure. Pitt had little time to master the problems of poverty and produce a strategy. Ehrman also notes, however, that, at this time, there was no common agreement on how the problem of poverty was to be tackled, at a social or political level. Coleridge's criticisms of the Bill agree on all these points.
99. See Coleridge, Pitt and Bonaparte. Pitt, 19 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. I, 223-224; and Parliament III, 1 Feb. 1800, E.O.T. I, 144. He discusses here, the government's role in the welfare of the nation.
100. Coleridge, Queries, 9 Jan. 1798, E.O.T. I, 12.
101. Coleridge, Watchman, pp.102-103.
102. See Coleridge, Pity (1795), Poems I, ll.12-14. p.93. He likens individual acts of kindness to those performed by Jesus. See also Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement (1795), Poems I, ll.43-48, p.107. Coleridge urges people to be amongst the oppressed and feel for them.

1. The best biographical account of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's relationship after 1802, is contained in Mary Moorman, William Wordsworth: The Later Years, 1803-1850 (Oxford, 1965). There is no comparably detailed account for Coleridge, but a good, general biographical account is to be found in W.J. Bate, Coleridge, (London, 1968).
2. Wordsworth, Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood (1802-4), Poems I, ll.1-9, pp.523-524.
3. The failure of the Coleridge's marriage has often been attributed to the belief that Sara was a nagging wife, who little understood her husband's intellect and genius, and that she was forced on Coleridge by Robert Southey. This is the image of the marriage which Coleridge himself cultivated. This view is contested in the recent biography of Sara Coleridge: Molly Lefebure, The Bondage of Love (London , 1986). Molly Lefebure makes a convincing case that Sara was a devoted, loving, far from unintelligent, wife and that she and Coleridge were, at first, a happy and loving couple. Lefebure contests that it was Coleridge's addiction to opium which eventually caused a breakdown in the marriage. Perhaps in this book and her previous biography of Coleridge, A Bondage of Opium, (London, 1974). Molly Lefebure is a little too ready to attribute almost everything to Coleridge's opium addiction. There is no doubt, however, that the addiction must have imposed a severe strain, and Lefebure's championing of Sara Coleridge is well argued and just.
4. Coleridge, Dejection: An Ode (1802), Poems I, ll.33-38, p.364.
5. ibid., l.137, p.368.
6. Coleridge, Friend II, 1 June 1809, p.15. See also 'Letter to J.W. Tobin', 17 Sept. 1800, Letters I, 623. This is his earlier acknowledgement that the poetic art was not suited to him.
7. Wordsworth dedicated The Prelude (1805) to his friend Coleridge. It was 'addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's intellect is deeply indebted'. See Wordsworth, Preface to 'The Excursion' (1814), P.W. V, 2.
8. See ibid., 2. Wordsworth here states that his plan in The Recluse was to write 'a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature and Society'. Coleridge had a similar intent in planning his 'magnum opus', which, like Wordsworth's epic, exists only in fragments.
9. Wordsworth expressed his sense of loss, and sorrow, at the change he perceived in Coleridge's condition, and in their friendship, in his poem, A Complaint (1806), Poems I, 731.
10. Radical republicanism had briefly revived during the last years of the Revolutionary Wars, e.g. in Yorkshire in 1801-2, with the 'Black Lamp' agitation. Public opinion, at this time, had been in favour of peace, but by 1803 the climate had changed and war against the 'despot' Napoleon was again popular. The radical movement collapsed and even the reform group within the Whigs disintegrated leaving only a few individuals like Francis Burdett and William Cobbett to keep it alive. The demise of radicalism in this year is attributable to the general feeling that the government's war policy was correct. The demise did not take place because of government repression or because the movement was internally weak. See H.T. Dickinson, British Radicalism and the French Revolution, 1789-1815, (Oxford, 1985). For the continued existence of radicalism in London during

the war years, in subdued circumstances till the 1810s, see J. Ann Hone, For the Cause of Truth, (Oxford, 1982).

11. Wordsworth, October 1803 (1803), Poems I, ll.1-4, p.597.
12. See Wordsworth, England: the time is come ... (1802), Poems I, ll.10-14, p.560.
13. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 226.
14. Coleridge, The Men and the Times. II, 20 Aug. 1803, E.O.T. I, 428.
15. See, especially, the following articles by Coleridge in E.O.T. I: Mr. Pitt's Return to Office, 8 Oct. 1802, p.349; Letter I to Mr. Fox, 4 Nov. 1802, p.385; Our Future Prospects, 6 Jan. 1803, p.421.
16. Coleridge, The Men and the Times. II, 20 Aug. 1803, E.O.T. I, 430.
17. Coleridge, Friend II, 31 Jan. 1810, pp.303-304.
18. This was a favourite point which Coleridge made in many of his writings and will be investigated further in Chapter V, below. In support of his view that war was the best, pragmatic policy for establishing peace, Coleridge cites Sir John Suckling, Tragedy of Brennoralt (1719) in The Men and the Times. II, 20 Aug. 1803, E.O.T. I, 436.
19. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. I, 7 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 38.
20. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards, VI, 21 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 73.
21. See Coleridge, Friend II, 31 Jan. 1810, p.301.
22. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W I, 227-228.
23. See ibid., 334.
24. Wordsworth, Ode: The Morning of the Day Appointed for a General Thanksgiving (1816), Poems II, l.158, p. 323.
25. ibid., ll.57-70, pp.320-321.
26. Wordsworth, 'Advertisement' (1816) to Thanksgiving Ode (1816), P.W. III, 463.
27. Wordsworth, Occasioned by the Battle of Waterloo ... (1816), Poems II, ll.5-7, p.334.
28. See Wordsworth, Ode: 1815 (1816), Poems II, pp.975-976. These are ll.106-109 of the original poem, which were excised for the 1845 edition of Wordsworth's poems.
29. See P.B. Shelley, Peter Bell the Third (1819), Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, and G.M. Matthews, (Oxford, 1970), p.346. See particularly Part VI, cantos 36-38, p.360.
30. Coleridge, Fears in Solitude (1798), Poems I, ll.129-197, pp.260-263.
31. Coleridge, The Men and the Times. I, 18 July 1803, E.O.T. I, 425.
32. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. VI, 21 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 75-76.
33. ibid., 76.
34. ibid., 76-77.
35. Coleridge, Friend II, 31 Jan. 1810, p.300.
36. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. I, 7 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 38.
37. Coleridge, The War. XVIII (contd.), July 1816, E.O.T. III, 247.: fragment of a projected article.
38. Coleridge, The Present Crisis, 4 Jan. 1814, E.O.T. II., 368.
39. See Coleridge, The Duke of York II, c. 5 July 1811, E.O.T. III, 224. A suppressed article in which he defends the need for a standing army. Compare with his old opposition to such armies in The Plot Discovered, 1795 Lects., 314-315.
40. Coleridge, Friend I, 565.
41. See Edmund Burke, Reflections, pp.228-229.
42. See Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.931-940, pp.408 and 410.
43. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.234-237 and 249-250, pp.50-51.
44. ibid., l.714, p.101.

45. ibid., ll.768-820, pp.102-104.
46. ibid., l.716, p.101.
47. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W III, 163-164.
48. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. VII, 22 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 80.
49. Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, p.33.
50. Coleridge, 'Letter to T.G. Street', 2 Oct. 1813, E.O.T. III, 237.
51. The original passage on the equalisation of condititons is discussed above in Chapter II, part (c), Rights and Duties, p.51
52. Coleridge, The Friend I, 337. Here Coleridge prints the truncated version of Conciones ad Populum (1795).
53. Wordsworth attacks the Treaty in Cintra, Prose W I 253 and passim. Coleridge attacks it in Letters on the Spaniards. II, 8 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 43-44.
54. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 157.
55. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.981-982, p.412.
56. Wordsworth, Thanksgiving Ode (1816), Poems II, l.153, p.323.
57. ibid., l.148, p.323.
58. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 157.
59. ibid,., 155.
60. ibid., 165.
61. ibid., 160.
62. See Wordsworth, A Help for the Memory of the Grant Independent, (1818), Poems II, ll.25-30, p. 379.
63. See Mary Moorman, William Wordsworth: The Later Years, 1803-50, (Oxford, 1965), p.73.
64. Coleridge, The Men and the Times. I, 18 July 1803, E.O.T. I, 424.
65. When Coleridge, in a seemingly disinterested fashion, called Englishmen to think and act for themselves, he added the qualification that he was sure that, 'the sense of the country is against Mr. Fox'. See The Men and the Times. II, 20 Aug. 1803, E.O.T. I, pp.434-435.
66. Coleridge, Mr. Pitt's Return to Office, 8 Oct. 1802, E.O.T. I, 346.
67. For Coleridge's characterisation of Washington as a great leader, at one with his own people, see the following articles in E.O.T. I: General Washington I. Obituary, 27 Jan. 1800, pp.131-133 and General Washington II. His Will, 25 Mar. 1800, pp.228-232.
68. Coleridge added an 'Apologetic Preface' to the 1817 edition of Fire, Famine and Slaughter. See Poems I, 596. The original poem had been a very satirical attack on Pitt and his government. In the 'Apology', Coleridge claimed that he had not been serious when writing the original. It had been the product of the over-heated, fanciful imagination of a very young man. Also in Coleridge's reprint of his truncated version of Conciones ad Populum in The Friend (1818), he omitted a long passage attacking 'the detestable Minister', Pitt, who had pursued repressive policies. See Friend I, 331.
69. For Coleridge's articles criticising Fox in E.O.T. I, see Letter I. To Mr. Fox, 4 Nov. 1802, p.376, and Letter II. To Mr. Fox, 9 Nov. 1802, p.395. Coleridge is indebted, for many of his arguments here, to Burke's Two Letters ... on the Proposals for Peace with the Regicide Directory of France. (1796), The Works of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, (London, 1884) Vol.5, pp.152-434. It should, however, be noted that, in 1802, Coleridge still had hopes that Fox might yet return to his original principles and recognise that France was now an oppressive power and not a force for the liberty Fox had always admired.

70. Coleridge, The Men and the Times. I, 18 July 1803, E.O.T. I, 426.
71. Coleridge, The Party and the Prince Regent, 31 Mar. 1812, E.O.T. II, 340.
72. Coleridge used the term 'Jacobin' to describe the Burdettites in The Burdettites. I, 24 May 1811, E.O.T. II, 164-166. Coleridge had once considered such an imprecise use of language as a sign which betrayed the user's moral and political dishonesty or superficial thinking. In the years after 1802, however, Coleridge's increasingly polarised view of the political debate, encouraged him to place all those who wished to change the constitution, no matter how moderately, into a 'Jacobin' grouping.
73. Coleridge, Spencer Perceval, 14 May 1812, E.O.T. II, 348.
74. Coleridge, Mr. Southey and Wat Tyler IV, 2 Apr. 1817, E.O.T. II, 477.

1. The O.E.D. cites 1836 as the first use of 'nationalism' as a doctrine that certain nations are the object of divine election; and in 1844 it was first used in the sense of devotion to one's nation or as a policy of national independence.
2. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.124-126, p.318.
3. See Coleridge, France: An Ode (1798), Poems I, ll.31-42, p.245.
4. Wordsworth's most sustained exploration of the concept of the nation and its independence is to be found in his sonnet sequence, Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty, P.W. III, pp.109-163.
5. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards III, 9 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 53.
6. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 363.
7. Wordsworth, 'Advertisement' (1816), Thanksgiving Ode (1816), P.W. III, 463.
8. ibid., p.463.
9. Coleridge, Friend II, 325.
10. ibid., 142.
11. There is a full discussion of these points, concerning the independence of the Maltese, in Coleridge, Friend II, 347-369.
12. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 292.
13. The structure of a pantisocracy has alrady been discussed above in Chapter II, pp 26-27.
14. Coleridge, Notes on Fox's Speech of 24th May (1803), E.O.T. III, 174.
15. Coleridge, Friend II, 323.
16. ibid., 323.
17. ibid., 323.
18. ibid., 323.
19. Coleridge, To Lord Stanhope (1795) Poems I, ll.7-12, p.89.
20. Wordsworth, Composed by the Sea-Side Near Calais (1802), Poems I, ll.1-6, p.576.
21. Coleridge, Fears in Solitude (1798), Poems I, ll.183-197, p.256.
22. See Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.577-580, p.390. Looking back on the early period of republican government in France, Wordsworth notes how he had then placed his trust in the people.
23. See 'Declaration of the Rights of Man' (1798), in Thomas Paine, op. cit., p.132.
24. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 267.
25. See Wordsworth's arguments in favour of government by the landed classes discussed below in Chapter VI, pp.161-165.
26. Coleridge, Friend I, 300.
27. For Coleridge's praise for Washington as a man of the people, see his pair of articles cited in Chapter IV, note 67, above.
28. Coleridge, Letter I. to Mr. Fox, 4 Nov. 1802, E.O.T. I, 383.
29. See Coleridge, Spencer Perceval, 14 May 1812, E.O.T. II, 348. He regarded the middle classes as the prime force for national civilisation, and as upholders of the country's independence.
30. See Coleridge, Ireland. VII, 13 Sept. 1811, E.O.T. II, 280-281.
31. Wordsworth, O'erweening Statesmen have full long relied ... (1810), Poems I, l.3, p.839.
32. Wordsworth, Alas, what boots ... (1809), Poems I, ll.7-14, p.826.
33. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. VIII, 20 Jan. 1810, E.O.T. II, 94.
34. ibid., 95.
35. ibid., 94.

36. Coleridge, Friend II, 15 Feb. 1810, p.326.
37. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 266-267.
38. Coleridge, The Fountain of British Honour, 2 Oct. 1813, E.O.T. II, 364.
39. Coleridge, Friend II, 15 Feb. 1810, p.321.
40. Coleridge, Friend II, 31 Jan. 1810, p.309.
41. See Coleridge, Friend II, 9 Nov. 1809, p.161. Trade and commerce are seen as agents drawing the nations of Europe closer together.
42. See Coleridge, 1795 Lects., pp.223-229.
43. Coleridge, Bonaparte III, 15 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. I. 216.
44. Coleridge, Parliament III, 1 Feb. 1800, E.O.T. I, 144.
45. For a full discussion of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's views on the predominance and effects of the capitalist commercial spirit in post-war Britain, see Chapter VII below.
46. Wordsworth, The Emigrant Mother (1802), Poems I, l.68, p.520.
47. Coleridge, Friend II, 9 Nov. 1809, p.161.
48. Coleridge, Friend II, 15 Feb. 1810, p.325.
49. Coleridge, Friend I, 421.
50. ibid., 421.
51. Coleridge compared the nations in respect of their intellectual character; with regard to the forms in which these intellectual qualities manifested themselves; in regard to their moral, religious and political characters; and finally in relation to time. (i.e. Germany is Past and Future, England is Past and Present, France is Present only). See Friend I, 420-423.
52. See Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, where Wordsworth constantly uses 'English' to denote the British army and nation, fighting against the evil of France.
53. Wordsworth, Rob Roy's Grave (1803), Poems I, ll.1-8, pp.653-654.
54. Coleridge, Friend I, 423. Coleridge sarcastically praises the work of these and other Scottish Enlightenment figures.
55. Coleridge, 'Letter to Thomas Boosey', 4 Sept. 1816, Letters IV, 667.
56. Coleridge, Ireland VII, 13 Sept. 1811, E.O.T. II, 281.
57. ibid., 280-281.
58. See Burke, Reflections (1790) pp.117-125. Burke's whole defence of the constitution rests primarily on an appeal to prescription. He attacked the abstract principles and rights claimed by the French. He praises 'the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties, as an entailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our prosperity.'(p.119)
59. ibid., pp.105-106. Burke argues that change had to be limited only to that part of the constitution which had produced a deviation. The change had to be effected so that it did not produce a decomposition of the state.
60. See J.K. Chandler, op. cit., Chapter VII. Wordsworth's literary interest in oral culture and tradition is discussed here.
61. See Wordsworth, 'Letter to W. Scott', 14 May 1808, Letters II, 237.
62. Wordsworth, Prelude, 1.302, p.452.
63. ibid., ll.296-298, p.452.
64. ibid., ll.305-312, p.452. Wordsworth hopes his poetry might have a power to convey enduring truths, as the great poetry in the past had done, and so become a power like Nature.
65. ibid., ll.318-320, p.454.
66. ibid., l.336, p.454.
67. Wordsworth, Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (1793), Prose W. I, p48.
68. Wordsworth, Essay on Epitaphs I (1810), Prose W. II, p.56.

69. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 280.
70. ibid., 228.
71. ibid., 228.
72. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 171-172.
73. ibid., 181.
74. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. I, 7 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 40.
75. Coleridge noted how the troubles in Ireland were made worse by the rekindling of vindictive recollections from the past. He thus distinguished between bitter memories or experiences, and time-honoured moral traditions which were worthy of respect. See Coleridge, To Mr. Justice Fletcher. VI. Part I, 9 Dec. 1814, E.O.T. II, 414.
76. Coleridge, Friend II, 7 Sept. 1809, p.56.
77. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. III, 9 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 53.
78. ibid., 53.
79. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. VII, 22 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 84.
80. ibid., 84.
81. Coleridge, 'Prospectus' (1809), Friend II, 18.
82. Coleridge, Friend I, 446.
83. ibid., 447.
84. ibid., 130.
85. Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, p.9.
86. See Burke, Reflections (1790), pp.89-90. Burke, here, argues that a political system cannot be judged on abstract grounds, but must be attuned to circumstance.
87. ibid., p.146. Burke praises the way in which the British constitution, 'our practical constitution', had perfectly promoted its ends.
88. ibid., p.285.
89. Wordsworth, Prelude, 11.60-68, p.440.
90. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, 11.560-566, p.171.
91. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 173.
92. ibid., 157.
93. ibid., 171-173.
94. ibid., 173-174.
95. ibid., 173.
96. Coleridge, Friend II, 19 Oct. 1809, p.139.
97. Coleridge, Friend II, 12 Oct. 1809, p.127.
98. Coleridge, Friend I, 152.
99. Coleridge, Friend II, 12 Oct. 1809, p.125.
100. ibid., p.131.
101. ibid., p.133.
102. Coleridge, Friend II, 30 Nov. 1809, p.199.
103. ibid., p.199.
104. ibid., p.197.
105. ibid., p.198.
106. Coleridge, Friend I, 46.
107. Coleridge, Friend II, 15 Feb. 1810, pp.327-328.
108. ibid., p.321.
109. ibid., p.328.
110. See Coleridge, The United States II, 5 Dec. 1811, E.O.T. II, 324.

1. See Burke, Reflections, pp.124 and 138. Burke argued that virtue was to be found in all conditions of society and not in the false aspiration to be different from one's present state. Trying to level conditions did not produce equality, but disrupted the natural order of things.
2. See Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.500-502, p.169.
3. Wordsworth, Home at Grasmere (1800-1806) ed. Beth Darlington (Ithaca N.Y., 1977), ll.429-438, pp.64 and 66.
4. See Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.988-999, pp.262-263.
5. ibid., ll.241-254, p.294.
6. See Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, pp.432-441. This is a discarded passage of the Solitary's speech. See especially ll.115-121, p.435.
7. ibid., ll.390-396, p.441.
8. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 234.
9. ibid., 263.
10. ibid., 288.
11. Wordsworth, Essay, Supplementary to the Preface (1815), Prose W. III, 84.
12. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. VIII, 20 Jan. 1810, E.O.T. II, 93.
13. Coleridge, War. XI, 5 June 1811, E.O.T. II, 185.
14. Coleridge, Friend II, 7 Sept. 1809, p.52.
15. Coleridge, Friend II, 15 Mar. 1810, p. 364.
16. Coleridge, Christ's Hospital, 15 July 1811, E.O.T. II, 226.
17. Coleridge, Mr. Southey and Wat Tyler. I, 17 Mar. 1817, E.O.T. II, 452.
18. Burke refers to 'a swinish multitude' in Reflections, p.173. Burke's critics often misquoted him on this point by substituting the definite article to imply that all the people were vicious and unprincipled. Burke probably only meant the particular group who condemned Bailly and Condorcet, and not the people as a whole.
19. Coleridge, Mr. Southey and Wat. Tyler. I, 17 Mar. 1817, E.O.T. II, 453.
20. Coleridge, The War. XVIII. Its Golden Side, 25 July 1816, E.O.T. II, 432-433.
21. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 171.
22. ibid., 188.
23. ibid., 188.
24. Coleridge, Friend II, 9 Nov. 1809, p.161.
25. Coleridge, Spencer Perceval, 14 May 1812, E.O.T. II, 348.
26. See Burke, Reflections, p.245. He praises the nobility as an 'ornament to the civil order'.
27. ibid., p.190.
28. See Mary Moorman, William Wordsworth: Later Years, 1803-1850., (Oxford, 1965). This charts his steadily increasing admiration for the aristocracy and the Lowthers in particular.
29. ibid., p.231.
30. The post was worth £400 a year but Wordsworth had to employ a trained clerk, John Carter, to help him in his duties. Carter also acted as his part-time gardener and helped to copy some of his poems.
31. See Lord Byron, Don Juan (1818), Poetical Works ed. Frederick Page and John Jump, (London, 1970), p.636.
32. ibid., p.912.
33. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 156.
34. ibid., 156.
35. ibid., 172.

36. ibid., 183
37. ibid., 172.
38. ibid., 186.
39. ibid., 186.
40. ibid., 186.
41. ibid., 187.
42. Wordsworth, Answer to 'Mathetes' (1809), Prose W. II, 19.
43. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 187.
44. ibid., 187.
45. There are few satisfactory biographies of Coleridge's middle and later years, but the following is a useful general outline of his fluctuating fortunes: Walter Jackson Bate, Coleridge, (London, 1968).
46. Coleridge, Affairs of France. II, 9 Oct. 1802, E.O.T. I, 353.
47. ibid., 353.
48. See Simon Maccoby, English Radicalism, 1786-1832, (London, 1955), pp.300-304.
49. Coleridge, The Affairs of France. II, 9 Oct. 1802, E.O.T. I, 354.
50. Coleridge, To Mr. Justice Fletcher. III, 21 Oct. 1814, E.O.T. II, 388.
51. Coleridge, Friend II, 19 Oct. 1809, author's footnote, p.141.
52. ibid., p.142.
53. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.170.
54. Coleridge, To Mr. Justice Fletcher. IV, 2 Nov. 1814, Berg ms. footnote, 20 Jan. 1832, E.O.T. II, 393.
55. Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, p.42.
56. See Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.124.
57. Wordsworth, Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey (1798), L.B., ll.94-103, p.116.
58. ibid., ll.111-112, p.116.
59. Wordsworth, fragments from Peter Bell ms.2, c.Feb. 1799, Prelude, p.496.
60. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.429-430, p.88.
61. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, l.3, p.286.
62. ibid., ll.126-137, pp.290-291.
63. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 267.
64. ibid., 292.
65. Wordsworth, Excursion, ll.999-1007, p.263.
66. Wordsworth, Essay, Supplementary to the Preface, Prose W. III, 77.
67. It should be noted that Wordsworth also regarded his own poetic oeuvre as consisting of distinct, yet related parts. The Prelude was seen as the ante-chapel to the projected Recluse. The Preface to the 1815 edition of his poems states, 'My guiding wish was, that the small pieces of which these volumes consist, thus discriminated, might be regarded under a two-fold view; as comprising an entire work within themselves, and as adjuncts to the philosophical Poem "The Recluse".', Wordsworth, Preface to the Edition of 1815 (1815), P.W. II, 433-434. Thus each poem formed a part of the total structure, the Cathedral which was his entire work.
68. Coleridge, General Washington. II. His Will, 25 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. I, 131 and 132.
69. Coleridge, Friend I, 46.
70. ibid., 94.
71. ibid., 300.
72. ibid., 98.
73. See Coleridge, Friend II, 15 Feb. 1810, p.326.
74. See Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, pp.126-127.
75. ibid., p.127.

76. See Coleridge, Friend II, 15 Feb. 1810, pp.328-329.
77. Coleridge, 'Letter to W.H. Coleridge', 8 Dec. 1818, Letters IV, 894.
78. Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, pp.59-60.
79. ibid., p.64.
80. See Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, pp.126-127.
81. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 298-299.
82. See Wordsworth, Pelayo (1808), Poems I, 819. Wordsworth recounts how the eighth century hero Pelayo fought against the Moors for freedom and independence. His great cave in the hills was a 'legislative hall' - the democratic centre of the struggle.
83. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 318.
84. ibid., 318.
85. ibid., 321.
86. See Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.92-98, p.156.
87. ibid., ll.913-915, p.106.
88. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 184.
89. ibid., 185.
90. ibid., 179-180.
91. ibid., 185.
92. Coleridge, Comparison of the Present State of France with that of Rome. II, 25 Sept. 1802, E.O.T. I, 327.
93. See Coleridge, The Duke of York. II, c.5 July 1811, E.O.T. III, 225.
94. Coleridge, Comparison of the Present State of France with that of Rome. II, 25 Sept. 1802, E.O.T. I, 328.
95. ibid., 328.
96. ibid., 328.
97. ibid., 328.
98. Coleridge, Who Are the Friends of the People? (c. 1816-1820), E.O.T. III, 248.
99. See Coleridge, America, 29 July 1811, E.O.T. II, 236.
100. Coleridge, Friend I, 447.
101. See Burke, Reflections, p.117.
102. See ibid., p.86. Burke attacked those who pretended to be zealous for the Revolution Settlement and the constitution, but who had really wandered from its true principles, or had deliberately misinterpreted them for their own ends. They were not true adherents of the principles of the Revolution of 1689, because these principles still underpinned the existing constitution.
103. ibid., p.100. Burke argued that the Revolution Settlement of 1689 had not given people the general right to choose their own governors, cashier them for misconduct, or form a government for themselves.
104. See John Williams, 'Salisbury Plain: Politics in Wordsworth's Poetry', Literature and History, Vol. 9: 2, Autumn 1983, pp.164-193. Williams argues that Wordsworth's adherence to the Common wealth tradition can be seen in his poetry from the composition of Salisbury Plain (1791-93, possibly 1794) onwards. Williams tends to underestimate the element of new radical thinking evident in Wordsworth's early work. Even between 1798 and 1802, Wordsworth's aim was still to lodge his old republican beliefs in a more congenial context, as we have argued before, above, in Section I. Although his interest in Commonwealth ideas is certainly evident by the end of the decade, it was not to be until after 1802 that Wordsworth wrote extensively on the Revolution Settlement and appealed to it as the basis for the current constitution.
105. Wordsworth, Great men have been among us (1802), Poems I, ll.1-9, pp.559-560.
106. Wordsworth, London, 1802 (1802), Poems I, ll.1-8, p.579.

107. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 288.
108. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 163.
109. Coleridge, Apologetic Preface to 'Fire, Famine and Slaughter', (1815), Poems I, 604.
110. ibid., 604.
111. See Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. I, 7 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 38.
112. Coleridge, Friend II, 7 Sept. 1809, pp.55-56.
113. Coleridge, Friend I, 446.
114. Coleridge, Friend II, 30 Nov, 1809, p.197.
115. ibid., pp.197-198.
116. ibid., p.198.
117. ibid., pp.198-199.
118. Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, pp.108-109.
119. ibid., p.109.
120. See Burke, Reflections, pp.281-282.
121. ibid., p.285. Burke admits that though there may have been deviations from the original concept of the constitution (like influence and patronage) these were still pragmatic and helped the constitution to function.
122. For a recent discussion of the general revival of radicalism in the war years, see H.T. Dickinson, British Radicalism and the French Revolution, 1789-1815, (Oxford, 1985), Chapter IV.
123. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.1-6, p.186.
124. See Wordsworth, November, 1813 (1813), Poems I, 862.
125. Wordsworth, Pelayo (1808), Poems I, l.57, p.820.
126. Wordsworth, Emperors and Kings ... (1816), Poems II, ll.12-14, p.348.
127. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 157.
128. ibid., 157.
129. ibid., 160.
130. ibid., 160.
131. ibid., 172.
132. ibid., 183.
133. ibid., 183.
134. Wordsworth, 'Two Letters to the Editor of the "Westmorland Advertiser and Kendal Chronicle"', 21 Feb. 1818, Prose W. III, 198.
135. ibid., 198.
136. ibid., 201.
137. See Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 184.
138. ibid., 193.
139. See Coleridge, Affairs of France. II, 9 Oct. 1802, E.O.T. I, 353-355.
140. Coleridge, Friend I, extract from an unused passage, n. 2. p.535.
141. Colerdge, Letter II. To Mr. Fox, 9 Nov. 1802, E.O.T. I, 397.
142. See Coleridge, Friend I, 413. Coleridge quotes, with approval, William Sedgewick's Justice Upon the Armie Remonstrance ... (1648): 'For the King is in the people, and the people is in the King.' King and people achieved greatness through each other.
143. Coleridge, The Character of Queen Charlotte, c. 4 Dec. 1818, E.O.T. III, 255.
144. Coleridge, The Regent and Mr. Perceval, 19 Apr. 1811, E.O.T. II, 117.
145. Coleridge, The Duke of York. II, c. 5 July 1811, E.O.T. III, 231.
146. Coleridge, Old and New Whigs, 29 June 1811, E.O.T. II, 205.
147. Coleridge, Spencer Perceval, 14 May 1812, E.O.T. II, 348.
148. Coleridge, The Duke of York. II, c. 5 July 1811, E.O.T. III, 231.
149. ibid., 230-232.
150. Coleridge, The Affairs of France. II, 9 Oct. 1802, E.O.T. I, 354.

151. Coleridge, Friend II, 19 Oct. 1809, p.140.
152. See Coleridge, Watchman, pp.36-39 and p.152.
153. Coleridge, Mr. Sheridan's Appointment, 24 Feb. 1804, E.O.T. II, 5.
154. Coleridge, The Regent and Mr. Perceval, 19 Apr. 1811, E.O.T. II, 113.
155. ibid., 113.
156. ibid., 115.
157. ibid., 115-116.
158. ibid., 119.
159. Coleridge, Old and New Whigs, 29 June 1811, E.O.T. II, 205-206.
160. Coleridge, The Duke of York. II, c. 5 July 1811, E.O.T. III, 225.
161. Burke, Reflections, p.120.
162. ibid., p.275.
163. ibid., p.229.
164. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 179.
165. ibid., 180.
166. ibid., 180.
167. ibid., 175.
168. ibid., 175.
169. ibid., 175.
170. ibid., 183-184.
171. ibid., 189.
172. Wordsworth, Answer to 'Mathetes' (1809), Prose W. II, 11.
173. ibid., 11.
174. See Coleridge. Friend II, 12 Oct. 1809, pp.128-129.
175. ibid., p.133.
176. ibid., p.133.
177. See Coleridge, The Burdettites. I, 24 May 1811, E.O.T. II, 165. Coleridge refers to the democratic constituency of Westminster where he doubts that the people are capable of adjudicating on difficult, complex, political matters.
178. Coleridge, To Mr. Justice Fletcher. II, 29 Sept. 1814, E.O.T. II, 384.
179. Coleridge, Friends to Reform, 11 June 1811, E.O.T. II, 190.
180. Coleridge, The Regent and Mr. Perceval, 19 Apr. 1811, author's note, E.O.T. II, 115.
181. ibid., 115.
182. See Coleridge, Friend II, 7 Sept. 1809, p.56.
183. ibid., p.57.
184. Coleridge, Astonishing Events (1823), E.O.T. III, 265.
185. See Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, p.55. Coleridge argues that the goal of men must be to become at one with the Will of God. It followed that the manual which statesmen must use in constituting the frame of society in order to effect this one-ness, was the Bible itself.
186. ibid., p. 62.
187. ibid., Coleridge's annotation to Richard II, n. 6., pp.62-63.
188. See Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, author's note, p.216.
189. See Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.124.
190. See Burke, Reflections, pp.118-119.
191. ibid., pp.149-151.
192. Coleridge, Comparison of the Present State of France with that of Rome ...II, 29 Sept. 1802, E.O.T. I, 329.
193. Coleridge, Letter I. To Mr. Fox, 4 Nov. 1802, E.O.T. I, 383. For Burke's similar claim, see note 190 above.
194. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 229.

195. See Burke, Reflections, pp.149-150.
196. Coleridge, Friend II, 30 Nov. 1809, pp.201-202.
197. ibid., p.201.
198. Coleridge, Dissenting Ministers. I, 14 May 1811, E.O.T. II, 145.
199. Coleridge, The Character of Queen Charlotte, c. 4 Dec. 1818, E.O.T.III, 253.
200. The long passage from The Friend (1809) (see note 196, above) was to be reprinted in the expanded and revised version of The Friend in 1818, and also in A Lay Sermon (1817) where Coleridge omitted the second positive end, but added that governments should not promote a state which necessitated the 'virtual disfranchisement of any class of the community', L.S., Lay Sermons, p.217. This did not mean, however, that these classes should necessarily be given a direct say in government, but merely that they should always be, at least, virtually represented by M.P.s.
201. See Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 229. Wordsworth praised Britain's and Spain's long tradition of liberty and independence. He admired the way in which the Spaniards revered the past and were prepared to go to war for their habitual liberties.
202. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 327.
203. ibid., 327.
204. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 170.
205. Wordsworth, 'Letter to the Editor of the "Westmorland Gazette",' 31 Dec. 1819, Prose W. III, 202.
206. See Coleridge, Friend II, 12 Oct. 1809, p.131.
207. Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. II, 9 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 52.
208. Coleridge, Friend II, 19 Oct. 1809, p.144.
209. Coleridge, Comparison of the Present State of France with that of Rome ... III, 2 Oct. 1802, E.O.T. I, 338-339.
210. Coleridge, Friend II, 15 Feb. 1810, p.329.
211. Coleridge, Comparison of the Present State of France with that of Rome ... II, 29 Sept. 1802, E.O.T. I, 330.
212. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.151.
213. ibid., pp.150-152.
214. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 158.
215. Wordsworth, Feelings of the Tyrolese (1810), Poems I, ll.1-4, p.827.
216. See Burke, Reflections, p.190.
217. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 176.
218. Coleridge, Friend II, 12 Oct. 1809, pp.131-132.
219. Coleridge, Friend II, 19 Oct. 1809, p.142.
220. Coleridge, Ireland VII , 13 Sept. 1811, E.O.T. II, 281.
221. Coleridge, The Duke of York II, c. 5 July 1811, E.O.T. III, 231.
222. ibid., 231. Coleridge argued that the people, having no fixed property, had still a 'prudential' and 'moral' interest in the nation's welfare, by virtue of the nation's laws and interdependent constitutional structure.
223. ibid., 225.
224. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, pp.215-216.
225. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.515-522, p.169.
226. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 173-174.
227. Coleridge, Friend II, 28 Sept, 1809, p.101.
228. ibid., p.102.
229. Coleridge, Friend I, 517.

1. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.220.
2. For a discussion of the relationship between the Luddites and political agitation, see J.R. Dinwiddy, 'Luddism and Politics in the Northern Counties', (1979), Social History, 4, 3-63.
3. See Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 167., for his views on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in 1817. See Coleridge, Mr. Coleridge's Second Lay Sermon, 25 Mar. 1817, E.O.T. II, 462., for his defence of government tactics.
4. See Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, 432. In this excised passage from the poem, Wordsworth argues that although the poor lived a life of regular hardship, their position had been appointed by God. Nevertheless, it was not intended that the poor should have to live in abject poverty. Their consolation was that such a simple life brought them nearer to God.
5. See Wordsworth, The Tinker (1802), Poems I, 542-543.
6. See Wordsworth, Home at Grasmere (1800-1806), ed. Beth Darlington, (Ithaca, N.Y., 1977), M.S. B., ll.455-468, pp.66 and 68.
7. See Wordsworth, 'Letter to Sara Hutchinson', 14 June 1802, Letters I, pp.366-367.
8. Wordsworth, Admonition (1804), Poems I, ll.9-11, p.618.
9. See Burke, Reflections pp.202 and 372.
10. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 187.
11. See Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, excised passage, ll.390-396, p.441.
12. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.363-382, p.298.
13. Wordsworth, Thanksgiving Ode (1816), 'Note' (1816), P.W. III, p.463.
14. This key passage from A Moral and Political Lecture (1795) was retained when Coleridge reprinted the much abbreviated version of the lecture in The Friend (1818). It was clearly still important and relevant to the author. See Friend I, 331.
15. Coleridge, Conciones ad Populum, 1795 Lects., p.43.
16. Coleridge, To Mr. Justice Fletcher. I, 20 Sept. 1814, E.O.T. II, 376.
17. See John Colmer, Coleridge, Critic of Society, (Oxford, 1959), pp. 125-127. Colmer argues that there was no significant change in Coleridge's views on the issue of the poor and that the phrase he used in 1814 shows that Coleridge was right to claim that his principles remained consistent. As we have argued, however, the statement of 1814 does reveal a significant change in Coleridge's interpretation of the problem, even if it still shows great sympathy for the plight of the poor.
18. See William Cobbett, 'Address to the Journey men and Labourers', Political Register, 2 Nov. 1816.
19. See Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.167.
20. Coleridge, The War. XVIII. Its Golden Side, 25 July 1816, E.O.T. II, 431.
21. See Coleridge, Friend II, 9 Nov, 1809, p.166.
22. See Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.157.
23. ibid., pp.159-160.
24. ibid., p.148.
25. Coleridge, Price of Grain, 19 Sept. 1811, E.O.T. II, 299.
26. See Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.167, and Coleridge, 'Letter to Thomas Allsop', 13 Dec. 1819, Letters IV, 979. For Cobbett's views, see William Cobbett, Political Register, 30 Nov. 1816.
27. See Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, pp.121-122, and author's note p.122.

28. See Coleridge, Mr. Coleridge's Second Lay Sermon, 25 Mar. 1817, E.O.T. II, 463-464.
29. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.158.
30. ibid., author's note, p.160.
31. ibid., p.163.
32. ibid., p.207.
33. See Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations (1776), Book I, Chapter 8.
34. See Edmund Burke, Three Letters ... on the Proposals for Peace with the Regicide Directory of France, Letter III, (1797), The Works of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, Vol. V, (London, 1884), pp.261-355.
35. See Wordsworth, Home at Grasmere (1800-1806), ed. Beth Darlington, (Ithaca, N.Y., 1977), MS.B., ll.161-170, pp.46 and 48.
36. Although Wordsworth believed that rural life had compensations which partly redressed the balance of hardship, he acknowledged that the life of a country labourer could be one of unremitting toil and drudgery, which might eventually dull the spirits. See Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.402-419, pp.278-279.
37. See Wordsworth, Composed upon Westminster Bridge (1802), Poems I, 574.
38. See Wordsworth, St. Paul's (1808), Poems I, 798.
39. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, Notes for Book III, l.931, p.422.
40. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 171.
41. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, l.121, p.269.
42. Wordsworth, Home at Grasmere (1800-1806), ed. Beth Darlington, (Ithaca, N.Y., 1977), MS.D., ll.593-602, p.89.
43. See Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.365-369, p.120. Wordsworth hopes that the traditional values of the country may yet penetrate the cities and make them more tolerable.
44. Wordsworth, Through Cumbrian wilds ... (1806), Poems I, ll.2-8, p.733.
45. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.89-95, p.268.
46. The destructive influences of Napoleon and industrialisation were described in near identical terms by Wordsworth. Compare Wordsworth's portrayal of the new industrial system discussed in this chapter, above, with his view of the war in his Thanksgiving Ode (1816), Poems II, especially Stanza V, pp.321-322.
47. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.1262-1263, p.149.
48. ibid., p.149.
49. ibid., ll.185-195, p.271.
50. ibid., ll.113-119 and 126-128, p.290.
51. See Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 324-325.
52. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.71-80, p.440.
53. Wordsworth, Written in London, September, 1802 (1802), Poems I, ll.5-9, p.580.
54. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.236-238, pp.272-273.
55. ibid., ll.311-334, pp.275-276.
56. See Coleridge, Friend II, 23 Nov, 1809, p.196.
57. Coleridge, Friend II, 9 Nov, 1809, p.160.
58. ibid., p.160.
59. See Coleridge, The War. XVIII. Its golden Side, 25 July 1816, E.O.T. II, 431.
60. See Coleridge, Letters on the Spaniards. VI, 21 Dec. 1809, E.O.T. II, 76.
61. Coleridge, Friend I, 518.
62. Coleridge, Letter to William Mudford', May 1818, Letters IV, 856.
63. ibid., 856.
64. Coleridge. L.S., Lay Sermons, 224.
65. ibid., 204.
66. ibid., 211.

67. ibid., 169-170.
68. ibid., author's note, p.169.
69. ibid., 170.
70. ibid., 225.
71. See Coleridge, The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Kathleen Coburn, Vol.2, Text and Notes, (London, 1962), 2223 and n. This is a notebook entry for 1804 in which Coleridge wrote down a reminder of Harrington's idea that the first nation that recovered the health of ancient prudence, would certainly govern the world. Harrington had expressed fears in Oceana, similar to Coleridge's, that an overbalance of riches in money or goods threatened the traditions of the state.
72. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, pp.170-171.
73. ibid., 177.
74. ibid., p.191. Coleridge attributes the excessive commercial spirit 'not to the extent and magnitude of the commerce itself, but to the absence or imperfection of its appointed checks or counteragents.'
75. ibid., p.189.
76. See Coleridge, To Mr. Justice Fletcher. IV. 2 Nov. 1814, Coleridge's note in the Berg. ms., 20 Jan. 1832, E.O.T. II, 393-394. Coleridge argues that the ruling classes' subordination of people to things had resulted in the working classes' substitution of rights for duties, and this had led to the current challenge to the constitution, during the 1832 Reform Bill agitation.
77. See Frank O'Gorman, Edmund Burke (London, 1973), Chapter VI, pp.107-141. Here O'Gorman investigates Burke's decline in interest in humanitarian reform, from his younger days up till the 1790s.
78. Wordsworth, Cintra, Prose W. I, 267.
79. ibid., 271-272.
80. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 160.
81. Wordsworth, Thanksgiving Ode (1816), 'Note' (1816), P.W. III, 463.
82. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 187.
83. See Wordsworth, Composed in One of the Valleys of Westmorland on Easter Sunday (1814), Poems II, 290.
84. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.297-302, p.275.
85. See Wordsworth, Excursion, 'Note', (1843) for Book VIII, l.87, P.W. V, pp.468-469.
86. See Wordsworth, Excursion, 'Note' (1814) for Book VIII, ll.111-112, P.W. V, p.469.
87. See Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.208-216, p.272. The Wanderer argues for a moral use of man's powers over Nature.
88. Wordsworth, Excursion, 'Note' (1843) for Book VIII, l.87, P.W. V, p.469.
89. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 169.
90. Coleridge, Friend II, 14 Sept. 1809, p.69.
91. Coleridge, Friend II, 9 Nov, 1809, p.167. It should be remembered that Coleridge was well acquainted with the works of Malthus. The latter had been a Fellow at Jesus College, Cambridge, when Coleridge was there as a student. Coleridge had read and annotated the second edition of Malthus' work. See Coleridge, The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Kathleen Coburn, Vol. 1, Text and Notes, (London, 1957), 1832 and n.
92. Coleridge, Friend II, 16 Nov. 1809, pp. 172-173.
93. See Coleridge, Friend II, 30 Nov, 1809, p.201.
94. See Coleridge, The Duke of York. II, c.5 July 1811, E.O.T. III, 228.
95. Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, p.39.

96. ibid., p.124.
97. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, author's note, p.218.
98. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.223.
99. ibid., p.229.
100. See Coleridge, Friend II, 9 Nov. 1809, p.165.
101. ibid., p.169.
102. See Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.222.
103. See Coleridge, Lectures on Revealed Religion, 1795 Lects., pp.223-225. Coleridge also attacked the long hours of factory toil, which destroyed the soul of man, in A Moral and Political Lecture, 1795 Lects., p.11.
104. See Coleridge, 'Letter to C.A. Tulk', 21 Feb. 1818, Letters IV, 841-844. Coleridge recognises the need not just to engage the interest of the middle classes, but also to gain 'the public Ear - in Papers, Magazines and three peeny pamphlets', ibid., p.843.
105. Coleridge, Children in the Cotton Factories, 31 Mar. 1818, E.O.T. II, 484.
106. See Coleridge, Remarks on the Objections which have been urged against the Principle of Sir Robert Peel's Bill, 18 Apr. 1818, Inquiring Spirit, ed. Kathleen Coburn, (London, 1951), p.354.
107. ibid., p.353.
108. ibid., p.354.
109. ibid., p.359.
110. See Coleridge, 'Letter to W. Mudford', Apr. 1818, Letters IV, 853.
111. Coleridge, Remarks on ... Sir Robert Peel's Bill, 18 Apr. 1818, Inquiring Spirit, ed. Kathleen Coburn, (London, 1951), p.357.
112. Coleridge, The Grounds of Sir Robert Peel's Bill Vindicated by S.T. Coleridge, 24 Apr. 1818, Inquiring Spirit, ed. Kathleen Coburn, (London, 1951), p.362.
113. Coleridge, Remarks on ... Sir Robert Peel's Bill, 18 Apr. 1818, Inquiring Spirit, ed. Kathleen Coburn, (London, 1951) p.355.
114. ibid., p.356.
115. See Coleridge, 'Letter to C.A. Tulk', 21 Feb. 1818, Letters IV, 843.
116. Coleridge signed his pamphlet, Remarks on ... Sir Robert Peel's Bill, 18 Apr. 1818, in the following manner: 'to the Mutual Advantage of Master and Labourer', see Inquiring Spirit, ed. K. Coburn, (London, 1951), p.359. Coleridge's argument for the validity of state legislative intervention was that it would benefit all participants in the industrial process, not just the workers. It would, therefore, also further national prosperity and welfare.
117. Coleridge, 'Letter to J.H. Green', 2 May 1818, Letters IV, 854.
118. ibid., 854.
119. Coleridge, The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Kathleen Coburn, Vol3, Text, (London, 1973), 4482.
120. See Coleridge, E.O.T. II, 484. Note 2 by the editor, D. Erdman, charts the history of the Bill and the final Act of 1819.

1. Coleridge, Mr. Coleridge's Second Lay Sermon, 25 Mar. 1817, E.O.T. II, 462.
2. Coleridge, Friend, II, 30 Nov. 1809, p.207.
3. See Wordsworth, Thanksgiving Ode (1816), 'Note' (1816), P.W. III, 462.
4. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.351-362, pp.297-298.
5. ibid., l.401, p.299.
6. ibid., ll.413 -415, p.299.
7. Coleridge, The War. XVIII. Its Golden Side, 25 July 1816, E.O.T. II, 432-433.
8. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, pp.141-142.
9. Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, p.51.
10. Coleridge, Astonishing Events (1823), E.O.T. III, 265.
11. Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, p.84.
12. ibid., p.111.
13. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, author's note, p.165.
14. See Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.182-183, p.368; and Coleridge, Watchman, pp.4-5.
15. See J.K. Chandler, Wordsworth's Second Nature, (Chicago and London, 1984), Chapter V, pp.93-120.
16. Wordsworth, The Tables Turned (1798), L.B. l.9, p.105.
17. Wordsworth, On Seeing Some Tourists of the Lakes Pass by Reading, (1800), ll.3-5, p.432.
18. Wordsworth, Prelude, ll.290-388, pp.166-172.
19. ibid., ll.332-333, p.168.
20. ibid., l.295, p.166.
21. ibid., l.313, p.168.
22. ibid., ll.354-357, p.170.
23. ibid., ll.230-231, p.162.
24. ibid., ll.469-477, p.214.
25. ibid., ll.257-258 and 266-268, p.164.
26. ibid., ll.431-439, p.174.
27. ibid., ll.501-505, p.178.
28. ibid., ll.562-568, p.180.
29. Wordsworth, Thanksgiving Ode (1816), 'Note' (1816), P.W. III, 463.
30. See Coleridge, Conciones ad Populum, 1795 Lects., p.69.
31. See Coleridge, Watchman, pp.4-5.
32. Coleridge believed that these advantages were exemplified by Washington's plans for a central university in America. See Coleridge, General Washington II. His Will, 25 Mar. 1800, E.O.T. II, 229-230.
33. See Coleridge, To Mr. Justice Fletcher. IV, 2 Nov. 1814, E.O.T. II, 395.
34. Coleridge, Friend II, 25 Jan. 1810, author's note, p.288.
35. See Coleridge, Friend II, 25 Jan. 1810, p.288.
36. Coleridge, Christ's Hospital, 15 July 1811, E.O.T. II, 226.
37. Coleridge, The Friend II, 21 Sept. 1809, p.86.
38. See Coleridge, The Friend I, editor's note 4, pp.102-103.
39. Wordsworth, Westmorland, Prose W. III, 143.
40. ibid., p.143.
41. Coleridge's first Lay Sermon, The Statesman's Manual (1816) was addressed to the higher classes, and his second, A Lay Sermon (1817), was addressed to the higher and middle classes. Nevertheless in his 'Letter to G. Frere', 5 Dec. 1816, Letters IV, 695, Coleridge declared that A Lay Sermon should have been addressed to 'The Learned

and Reflecting of all Ranks and Professions, especially among the Higher Class'. Coleridge's specific educational aim is thus made clearer. The third Lay Sermon, which was to have been addressed to the lower classes, was never written.

42. Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.293-313, pp.295-296.
43. ibid., l.327, p.296.
44. ibid., l.328, p.297.
45. Wordsworth, Excursion, note for Book IX, l.299, P.W. V, 473.
46. See Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.394-397, p.299.
47. ibid., ll.346-350, p.297.
48. ibid., ll.408-415, p.299.
49. ibid., ll.398-408, p.299.
50. ibid., ll.465-469, p.301.
51. ibid., ll.474-477, pp.301-302.
52. Wordsworth, Essay, Supplementary to the Preface (1815), Prose W. III, 74.
53. See Wordsworth, Excursion, P.W. V, ll.639-646, pp.307-308.
54. ibid., ll.733-737, pp.310-311.
55. This is a passage from A Moral and Political Lecture (1795) which he still included in the abbreviated version printed in The Friend (1818). See Coleridge, Friend I, 334-335.
56. Coleridge, Free-Thinkers, 9 Dec. 1815, E.O.T. II, 422.
57. See Coleridge, Is the Church in Danger? 11 June 1812, E.O.T. II, 331.
58. See Coleridge, To Mr. Justice Fletcher. IV, 2 Nov, 1814, author's note, E.O.T. II, 395-396.
59. See Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, author's note, p.40.
60. Coleridge, The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Kathleen Coburn, Vol.3, Notes, (London, 1973), 3291 n.
61. Coleridge, Friend II, 9 Nov. 1809, pp.165-166.
62. Coleridge, To Mr. Justice Fletcher. IV, 2 Nov. 1814, E.O.T. II, 397.
63. Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, p.41.
64. ibid., p.41.
65. ibid., p.42.
66. ibid., p.43.
67. ibid., p.49.
68. See Coleridge, Friend II, 14 Sept. 1809, pp.69-70.
69. Coleridge, Friend II, 26 Oct. 1809, p.152.
70. See Coleridge, On the Constitution of the Church and State (1830), ed. John Colmer, The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, X, (London and Princeton, N.J., 1976), Chapters IV and V, pp.42-60.
71. See Coleridge, 'Letter to C.A. Tulk', 12 Feb. 1821, Letters V, 138.
72. Coleridge, S.M., Lay Sermons, p.36.
73. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.174.
74. ibid., p.173.
75. Coleridge, The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Kathleen Coburn, Vol.3, Text, (London, 1973), 4113.
76. Coleridge, L.S., Lay Sermons, p.230.
77. When the Revd. Orville Dewey met Wordsworth in 1833, he remarked on how the poet only became really animated when talking of political affairs. Wordsworth, indeed, claimed that although he was only known as a poet, he spent twelve hours contemplating the condition of society to every one hour devoted to poetry. (See Introduction, note 7, above). Dewey reported that Wordsworth still favoured properly planned reforms, but that he was much dismayed by the ignorance of the people and therefore believed that it would take a long time before the situation could be improved by educational and social

reform. For the moment, Wordsworth was convinced that the people still lived ignorant and immoral lives and were certainly not fit to govern. (Wordsworth was obviously worried by the recent, though modest, extension of the franchise in the Reform Act of 1832.) Thus Wordsworth still supported gradual reforms which would raise the moral standards, and level of knowledge, of the people and so preserve the values of traditional society. Dewey states: 'In politics, Mr. W- professes to be a reformer, but upon the most deliberate plan and gradual scale; and he indulges in the most indignant yet argumentative diatribes against the present course of things in England, and in the saddest forebodings of what is to come,' Revd. Orville Dewey, The Old World and The New (1834), The Works of the Revd. Orville Dewey, (London, 1844), p.622.

78. See F.R. Leavis, (ed.), Mill on Bentham and Coleridge, (Cambridge, 1950), pp.39-40 and 99-101.

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